

HD

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Volume 37 Issue 1 Fall 2016



LOVE IN AN ADDICTIVE SOCIETY

PROCESSED

NOV 16 2016

U LIBRARY

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human Development Magazine is a quarterly publication for people involved in the work of fostering the growth of others. This includes persons involved in religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, pastoral care, education and those interested in the development of the whole person.

CONTACT US

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

(ISSN 0197-3096) Fall 2016 Volume 37 Issue 1.
Human Development Magazine is published quarterly by Guest House, Inc. 1601 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, Michigan 48360-1139.

Application to mail at Periodicals Postage Prices is pending at Lake Orion, MI and additional mailing offices.

PRINT SUBSCRIPTION RATE

United States and Canada, \$39.50 for one year; all other countries \$59.50 for one year; online/digital subscription: \$39.50 for one year.

Please visit website for discount subscription rates hdmag.org

Single Print copies: United States and Canada, \$10.00 plus shipping; all other countries, \$20.00 plus shipping.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
P.O. Box 292674, Kettering, OH 45429-0674

Copyright 2016 by HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Send new subscriptions, renewals, and change of address (please include mailing label if available) to:

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
P.O. Box 292674
Kettering, OH 45429-0674

Letters to the editor and all other correspondence may be sent to:

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE
E-mail: editor@hdmag.org
Phone: 1-877-545-0557

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT HDMAG.ORG

Photo Credits:
iStock Photo, 123rf.com



6

Love Searching
for Love



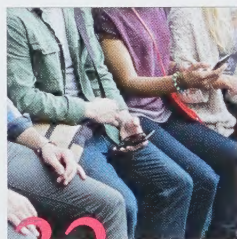
16

How Do I Love Thee?



26

Two Tips on Love
from the Parables
of Jesus



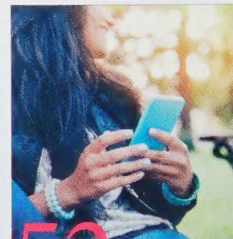
32

Relational Love
in a Digital Age



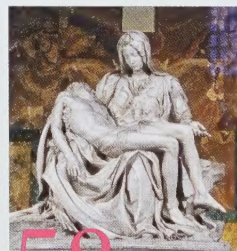
42

The Shape of Love
in an Age of Drift



52

Millennials and
Christian Love



58

Purified Love

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Fall 2016

Dear friends of Human Development,

"Actually." Young people today seem to spruce up most of their sentences by inserting this lovely adverb here or there. As I listen to them, it strikes me that they seem to be using "actually" to mean "honestly" or "really." And I suppose that makes sense. But in its standard usage, "actually" has to do with "here and now" in "this very moment."

As we put together this issue of Human Development, our Editorial Board wanted to pick up on themes from Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* and build on our previous issue "Praying our Experience," emphasizing again that in and through all the "ordinary" aspects of our lives, we are "actually" glorifying God. As we are "fully human," the divinity of God will shine through us. Where is God to be "found" or experienced? Again and again the New Testament answers, God is love. If we want to be God-like, if we want to find God and be found by Him, then we need to love all the people God places in our lives. Love, actually. Love in the concrete reality of our life and times.

At the end of her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy Day speaks of the beauty and wonder - and challenge - of God's love and human love working together in partnership. She notes that love in theory is a beautiful thing but love in practice can be something very demand-ing. Love actually!

In our digital age where everything is about an arm's length away from us, ordinary expressions of human love become all the more complicated. In our addictive society, it is easy to escape from the demands (but also the beauty) of concrete deeds of love. Hence this issue of Human Development: Love in an Addictive Society.

To set a tone, direction and overview for the issue, I wrote the first article "Love Seeking Love: From Eros to Agape." Building on insights from C.S. Lewis, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, the article speaks about the possibility of erotic love being purified into a sharing of God's unconditional love or what the New Testament calls "agape."

Fr. Donald Senior, C.P. a renowned Scripture Scholar at Catholic Theological Union, offers reflections on love in the Old and New Testament with special focus on I Corinthians 13, St. Paul's famous hymn on love; Fr. Senior notes how that passage is ultimately about communal love - that is, loving the whole Body of Christ.

The well-known story teller John Shea also turns to the Scriptures - in this case to two parables, the servant forgiven a great debt (Mt 18:23-35) and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24). As he interprets the parables, he draws these conclusions: we must internalize in concrete ways the experience of being loved and believe we are loved even in our apparent ugliness.

Dr. Susan Muto and Lori Mitchell McMahon write about the challenges of "Relational Love in a Digital Age." They focus especially on the need for privacy and boundaries in use of the internet and remind us that "on-line presence" is not always "real" presence!

In his essay, "The Shape of Love in An Age Adrift," Fr. Louis Cameli of Chicago Archdiocese notes how Christian love is very different from the way our culture describes it. The popular culture values autonomy and independence and expects reciprocity at all times while Christ loved in a way that was "self-forgetful" and fully committed with no strings attached.

In a short piece, Michael Charboneau, himself a Millennial living in NYC, describes the challenges that are especially unique to those raised in the digital age. Surprisingly, despite many obstacles to believing, they long for deep, loving relationships and appreciate lessons they learned from the Church of their formation.

Our Board thought a nice "closing piece" would be an examen of conscience/consciousness regarding how and why we love: is our love authentic? Do we see all love as partnership with God's "greater" love? Do we "actually" love God and neighbor?

To capture the awkwardness of love in an age addicted to our smart phones, the cover of our issue catches a couple trying to embrace but each also trying to keep up with all their text messages. Something of a visual parable: rushing to do two things at once takes the joy, spontaneity, tenderness and total focus out of love.

Finally, each issue usually has a line of Scripture which serves as its general theme. In this case, we settled on a phrase which resonates with Scripture but comes from the dramatic musical *Les Misérables*. In his dying benediction for his newly married daughter Cosette and husband Marius, Jean Valjean proclaims: "Remember the truth: to love another person is to see the face of God." Hopefully these essays will sharpen our vision to see the face of God - in the mirror and in every "actual" encounter.

Msgr. John P. Zeng

HD EDITORIAL BOARD

Linda Amadeo, R.N., M.S.
Monica Applewhite, Ph.D.
Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond, M.Div.
Rev. William A. Barry, S.J., Ph.D.
Brother Paul Bednarczyk, C.S.C., M.A.
Denise Bertin-Epp, RN, BScN, MSA
Rev. Brendan Callaghan, S.J., M.A., M.Phil., M.T.H.
Very Rev. John J. Cecero, S.J., Ph.D.
James J. Coupe, Psy.D., M.B.A.
Rev. Thomas M. Dragga, D.Min.
Rev. Thomas Gaunt, S.J., Ph.D.
Brother Brendan Geary, F.M.S., Ph.D.
Rev. Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp., Ph.D.
Robert M. Hamma, M.Div.
Most Rev. Donald F. Hanchon, M.Div.
Sr. Dorothy Heiderscheid, O.S.F., ACSW
Rev. Msgr. Richard Henning, S.T.D.
Baroness Sheila Hollins, Psy.D., LL.D.
Sr. Carroll Juliano, S.H.C.J., M.A.
Mary Elizabeth Kenel, Ph.D.
Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas, D.D.
Very Rev. José Magadia, S.J., Ph.D.
Rev. Matt Malone, S.J., M.A., S.T.B., B.D.
Sr. Donna Markham, O.P., Ph.D.
Rev. Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.
Very Rev. Ronald Mercier, S.J., Ph.D.
Rev. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, S.J., Th.D.
Rev. John Pavlik, O.F.M., Cap., M.Div.
Sr. Ana Maria Pineda, R.S.M., S.T.D.
Thomas Plante, Ph.D., ABPP
Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Ph.D.
Rev. Myles Sheehan, S.J., M.D.
Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T., Psy.D.
Elizabeth J. Susman, Ph.D.
Most Rev. David P. Talley, M.S.W., J.C.D.
Most Rev. Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, M.A., M.Div.
Robert J. Wicks, Psy.D.
Sr. Carol Zinn, S.S.J., Ed.D.
Rev. Hans Zollner, S.J., Ph.D.





**“To love another person is to see the face of God.”
- Victor Hugo, Les Misérables**

EDITORIAL TEAM



Msgr. John Zenz
Executive Editor



Robert Koval
CEO
Guest House, Inc.



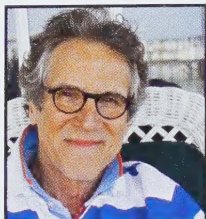
Bridget Bearss, RSCJ
Chair of the Board
Guest House, Inc.



Kim Critz
Design & Website Editor



Marc Dyker
Managing Editor



Jeff Jay
Associate Editor



Richard Hittle, SJ
Associate Editor



Patricia Cooney-Hathaway
Associate Editor



Colleen Richards
Associate Editor

UPCOMING GUEST HOUSE EVENTS

November 2, 2016

All Souls Mass and Luncheon
Guest House Scripps Mansion
Lake Orion, MI

December 8, 2016

Advent Vespers
Guest House Scripps Mansion
Lake Orion, MI

January 9-12, 2017

Alumni Winter Seminar
DiamondHead Beach Resort
Fort Myers Beach, FL

January 19-22, 2017

Alumnae Winter Seminar
DiamondHead Beach Resort
Fort Myers Beach, FL

April 24-27, 2017

Alumni Men's Retreat
Guest House Scripps Mansion
Lake Orion, MI

May 3-5, 2017

Walking With the Wounded
Guest House Scripps Mansion
Lake Orion, MI

June 7-9, 2017

Walking With the Wounded
Guest House Scripps Mansion
Lake Orion, MI

YOUR LEGACY LIVES ON IN THE CHURCH

Estate gifts notably impact the ministry of Guest House. Creating a gift through your will or trust is a meaningful way to leave a legacy that will make a difference for the greater good of the Catholic Church. Your estate gift can support a specific area or program, such as education or scholarships. Guest House is proud to welcome and offer treatment to all Catholic clergy and religious regardless of their ability to afford services.

Please contact Erika Walker,
Vice President of Development,
for more information about creating a gift
that reflects your wishes and your spirit:

248-393-8933

EWalker@guesthouse.org

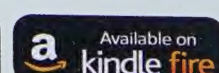
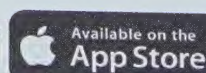


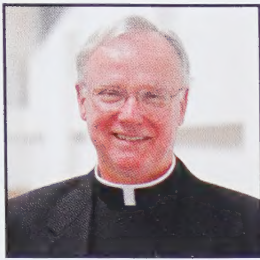
VISIT OUR WEBSITES
at HDMag.org or Guesthouse.org



FOLLOW US
On Facebook/[humandevlopmentmagazine](https://www.facebook.com/humandevlopmentmagazine)

GO DIGITAL!
DOWNLOAD THE HD MAGAZINE APP





Donald Senior, C.P.



John Shea



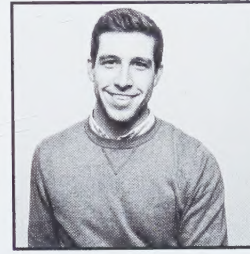
Susan Muto



Lori Mitchell McMahon



Father Louis J. Cameli



Michael Charboneau

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The editors of Human Development are quite eager to publish articles that translate the latest research in psychology, health, medicine, and spirituality to ministry, formation and practice. Our hope is that Human Development will be known as the most user-friendly ministry publication. This will require making complicated theoretical knowledge, research, and concepts understandable and applicable to the personal and professional lives of our readers.

Since ministry is in a time of significant transition and change, we anticipate that the articles we publish will enlighten and positively influence the daily decisions and practices of those in Church leadership, ministry formation, spiritual direction, and counseling of any kind. There are also a number of previously under-appreciated forces that uniquely influence ministry and ministers: cultural, organizational, and situational factors. We intend to highlight and honor these factors in the pages of Human Development. Accordingly, we ask prospective authors to be mindful of these considerations in their manuscripts. Manuscripts are received with the understanding

that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 double-spaced pages), with no more than six recommended citations and or readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing. When quoting sacred scripture, the New Revised Standard Version is preferred. All manuscripts are to be prepared according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition).

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and Bibliography/suggested readings. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Manuscripts should be submitted to Msgr. John Zenz at editor@hdmag.org as an email attachment.



LOVE SEARCHING FOR LOVE: FROM EROS TO AGAPE

by Msgr. John Zenz





What's "wrong" with all this "love language?" Is genuine love possible? Where do we "find" it? We need to turn things around and let love "find" us! Foolishly, we think love starts with ourselves. We forget that we would not be able to love others unless we had already experienced it. Somehow, even unknowingly, God loved us into existence. If we are searching for love it is because He made us with an inner GPS that hungers for love as much as it hungers for food.

As C.S. Lewis himself discovered (and expressed in the title of his autobiography) in the end, we are Surprised by Love. When looking for love too directly or consciously, it will always elude us for it cannot be purchased or earned, captured or figured out. It is a gift. Love sneaks up on us when we are unaware, unsuspecting, even lost. Love is a daily discovery, a gift hidden in the messy confusion of all our comings and goings. Love finds us when we stay still and accept the reality that our truest journey is always within.

Where is love? Perhaps the answer comes by rephrasing things: instead of asking "where is love" we need to ask "where is God?" St. John's Epistle and our Christian tradition proclaim over and over: "God is love." To find love, we must find God – or more precisely, be found by God. The most amazing thing of all is this: God is searching for us! Love is about mutual searching!

The purpose of this essay is to reflect on the journey to be with our lover, a journey which takes us inward and then outward, a journey Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI called an "exodus" out of the self, a movement toward God and others, a letting go of our ego. In many ways this journey is about the purification of love. We will be discussing human experiences of

love and how, within them and through them we can reach a deepening intimacy with God. His love is the "fire" within all our human loving – from the first spark of erotic fascination through affection, deepening friendship and into total unconditional gift of self.

From earliest infancy to last breath, we naturally and spontaneously seek to love and be loved. But we do not always understand or appreciate the process or enter into it with our whole heart and soul because we do not always bring God into the equation. Wanting control, we often resist the very love that can save us from ourselves – the love directed our way by God and others. This Divine Charity – perfect love – is called *agape* in Greek. It is a love "descending" from God to us whereas "*eros*" is "ascending" – from us to God. As we will see in this essay, in truth, these two loves cannot be split: there is *eros* within *agape* and *agape* perfects *eros*. After all, all and any love is a manifestation of God!

Written into the fiber of our human condition is "erotic" love – the desire to connect deeply with another. While erotic love might at first sound dangerous or sinful, actually it can be the first step of a journey toward a totally selfless love, the love of God for us and through us, a love we call "*agape*." This essay hopes to describe the journey from "*eros*" to "*agape*" especially against the backdrop of our addictive culture and the challenges of finding genuine human interaction in a society that hums along with digital reality.

Many famous spiritual mentors, authors and even saints throughout the centuries have struggled through the passage from *eros* to *agape*: St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton to mention a few. Great novelists

...instead of asking "where is love"
we need to ask "where is God?"

have depicted protagonists going through this purification of love. Consider, for example, Lorenzo's love for Lucia in *The Betrothed* by Alessandro Manzoni: after long, painful years of separation from his intended spouse, when Providence brought them together again, he had to forgive the very man who had caused all their grief. Lucia would not marry him unless he would reconcile with this evil man who had repented. Lorenzo's love had already gone through much purification but there was this last challenge – this time a conversion of his own heart. In our lives the passage from eros to agape is usually less dramatic but nonetheless just as real and often painful and humbling. It is a journey of letting go of ego and control, possessiveness, fear, jealousy and pride.

To understand this journey inward and outward let us reflect on the meaning of “eros” and “agape” in the context of the Greek language from which they come.

THE FOUR LOAVES

In his 1960 classic, *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis reminds us that the ancient Greeks had four distinct terms for love: storge, philia, eros, agape. Lewis suggests that the most simple and natural love is “affection” or storge, a humble love, desiring to share. Picture the giving love of a mother nursing her child and the needy love of the child receiving her care. Affection is the first stirring of love but it is not yet fully mature and refined. Affection can show itself in pity or thoughtfulness but it wants to be appreciated and needed.

A second term is philia or friendship love, something more profound because the giving and receiving is consciously, deliberately and freely mutual. Genuine friendship is free from “the need to be needed.” Side-by-side, friends gaze outward together. While friendship sometimes involves shared activity, it is often just “being there” with each other. In true friendship, there is no selfish holding-on to the other; in fact, there is usually a hope that others might also share in the relationship. While there is intimacy, it

is not exclusive. Precisely because friendship does not include the physical, even the deepest friendship love can feel incomplete. Yet, for that same reason there is a purity and freedom in the love of friends.

EROS: ON THE WAY TO AGAPE

C.S. Lewis treats the other two terms for love – eros and agape – together. At first this might seem odd since they would seem to be polar opposites. But actually, he insists, they are indeed connected. Eros is much more than sexual and carnal craving; ultimately it has to do with loving the Beloved and not just the pleasure the Beloved provides. The struggle or dark side of erotic love – whether between humans or directed toward other objects of desire – is that it can be possessive and loses perspective. An urgent craving, it demands immediate and constant attention.

There is a good aspect of eros: it takes us out of ourselves. The center of our world is no longer ourselves. There can even be an element of playfulness in erotic love inasmuch as erotic love reminds us we are part of a larger mystery: erotic love expresses the timeless attraction of male and female and the natural desire to procreate. The challenge of erotic love, C.S. Lewis points out, is that it clings to its “object” (be it a person or thing). To move forward, eros needs to “escape” from its own self-created gilded cage. This is where agape enters the picture.

Both Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have emphasized positive traits of eros and how it is a healthy aspect of agape; after all, we are body and soul. As the Pope Emeritus puts it in *Deus Caritas Est*, “Even if eros is at first mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination for the great promise of happiness, in drawing near to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself, increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, is concerned more and more with the Beloved... the element of agape thus enters into this love for otherwise eros is impoverished and even loses its own nature.” (art. 7)

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis emphasizes the beauty and goodness of passionate or erotic love in a healthy marriage. It is the love of friends taken to a new level, a conjugal love embracing the whole person. As he explains, this “wholeness” of body and spirit and its character of exclusivity make marriage the best possible symbol to describe the union of the human heart with God. (art. 142-152). In fact, the Holy Father points out that “the erotic dimension of love... must be seen as a gift from God that enriches the relationship of the spouses.” (art. 152)

No stranger to the challenge of purifying eros, St. Augustine, in his *Confessions* (Book 4,10) reminds us that our lasting happiness can never depend on something that we might eventually lose; otherwise, love would be a curse or a misery. The only love that will truly satisfy is love without end, the love God directs toward us. We need to see all other loves in relation to this one “constant,” abiding, all-defining relationship.

C.S. Lewis distinguishes “Gift-love” (agape) from “Need-love” (eros). Only God’s love can truly be agape because it is total and unconditional. He loves us by His own totally free choice. He has no need of us but He chooses to share His life with us. He also gives us the capacity to accept, understand and cooperate with His “Gift-love.”

Our own giving of self ordinarily finds expression through affection, eros or friendship. But ultimately, God’s “Gift-love” (grace or the Holy Spirit) within us opens us to love people we might not otherwise have been able to love. As grace takes over, our “Need-love” becomes more pure and detached, a part of God’s love. C.S. Lewis explains the process: “natural love is taken up into and made the tuned and obedient instrument of Love Himself.” (p 134) What C.S. Lewis describes resonates with the *Meditation for Obtaining Divine Love* at the end of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. All our actions are expressions of God’s love and our whole being is an extension of His love. Our love is a part of God’s

ever greater love. But all this happens with us as genuine partners and true lovers with God.

PARTNERS IN LOVE

One of the great themes of the Song of Songs is the goodness and beauty of human love in and of itself. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI explains in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, eros is not necessarily or automatically a bad thing. He notes that God Himself has a certain erotic- ecstatic joy at the beauty of all that He has created and the way that we respond to Him. But God’s “eros” is also completely “agape” inasmuch as it is directed toward us without our earning or deserving it and because it is always forgiving. As the Pope Emeritus puts it, in God we see eros “supremely ennobled ...purified as to become one with agape.” (ibid, art. 10)

The mutuality and fidelity of human lovers is a symbol, or better yet, an effective sacrament of God loving us. God’s forgiving and healing hesed-love clearly flows through the compassionate acceptance and patience the prophet Hosea showed his unfaithful wife Gomer. Isaiah 54 also boldly proclaims the connection of divine human love in terms of marriage and betrothal: “He who has become your husband is your maker... for a brief moment I abandoned you but with great tenderness I will take you back. ...With enduring love I take pity on you...” Our human love is a partnership with God’s Divine love. Our eros, affection and friendship blend together with God’s desire for us; a “spousal love” emerges. There is a sharing of “gifts” between us and God.

Again, the Pope Emeritus clarifies the relationship of our humanity and God as “communion” by reference to the Song of Songs. He explains this sacred text is “an expression of the essence of biblical faith: that man can indeed enter into union with God – his primordial aspiration. But this union is no mere fusion ... it is a unity which creates love, and unity in which both God and man remain themselves and yet become fully one.” (ibid)

Even as he focuses on marriage and family in his Post Synodal 2016 Exhortation on Marriage and Family, Pope Francis also speaks about the gift of virginity and consecrated celibacy and how their unique partnership with Divine Charity complements and builds up married love. All these states of life bear witness to the journey from eros to agape. As he explains, virginity symbolizes the love and freedom of the Kingdom, a love that is totally non-possessive. Marriage, for its part, is concrete and historical, a sign of the earthly Christ. The witness of fidelity we give each other in good times and in bad transforms each of us and all of us. (see art. 158-162) In every Christian life the ultimate vocation is the same: to invite God to make His home in the core of my being.

HOW DOES EROS BECOME AGAPE?

All of these ideas sound eloquent, beautiful and reassuring but as we know from Fr. Zosima, in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, "Love in reality is a harsh and dreadful thing." How does eros become agape? It "happens" gradually and mysteriously like seeds growing and leaven rising. Love unfolds its precious mystery in the concreteness and immediacy of everyday life when we let go of control and understand ourselves as part of a larger dynamic, ongoing process of Love beyond all-telling.

Consider, for example, the "testing" of Abraham in Genesis 22 when he was asked to choose love for God or love for God's gift, his only son Isaac: by an act of loving obedience, Abraham put his affectionate devotion for Isaac within a larger context. The story of the rich man in Mark 10 offers yet another example: it is one of the few places where we are told Jesus looked intently at a person with love (Greek text, agape) and asked him to leave everything and follow Him. The man refused and went away sad. An "agape" relationship with the Lord involves a letting go of things, relationships, expectations and comforts inasmuch as they might preoccupy us and hinder us from partnership with the Lord. Detachment from worldly desires and concerns is

for the sake of an attachment to the Lord's presence in the gifts and needs of all His "little ones" – that is, any and all who can never "repay" us. The deeper we go in accepting the love of the Lord, the more we are disposed and ready to love all others as we have been loved.

Consider the way that Jesus conversed with Peter in John 21 as He sought to rehabilitate him and prepare him for leadership. Three times Jesus asked Peter whether he loved Him. The first two times Jesus questioned Peter, his word for love was agape but Peter answered that he loved the Lord with a philial love. The third time, Jesus changed from agape to philia; He met Peter on his terms. The Lord accommodates human reality; He did so with Peter and does so with us. On our own, we are not capable of agape love. Happily, God works with us to purify our eros love. But we have to do our part - letting go of our ego defenses.

Part of the "exodus" from eros to agape involves a humble acceptance of the reality of who we are: A creature who is incomplete and always restless. It means coming to peace with the emptiness at the core of our being. God hollows us out that we might be available for Him. Embracing with peaceful gratitude our own core emptiness, we can then consecrate that "space" as reserved for God alone. We stop trying to "fill it" with addictive habits and relationships. Instead, we wait in patience with the God who also waits!

AGAPE IS EUCHARIST

Christ emptied Himself in pure "Gift-love" in His self-offering at the Last Supper and on the Cross. As Pope Emeritus Benedict explains, by sharing in the Eucharist "we enter into the very dynamic of His Self-giving." (art. 13) Sharing the one bread and one cup we become one body with him and each other. Agape is Eucharist, the whole Body of Christ. Again, Pope Benedict, "I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I belong to Him only in union with all those who have become or who will become His own." (art. 14)



All that we have discussed in this essay about the “exodus” from self to God and others and the purification of eros comes to a fulfillment on various levels: each of us personally and intentionally dedicates our core to the Lord. Secondly, we see the Lord shining through all our relationships. Thirdly, we rejoice in the way that love is also manifest in our families and parishes and throughout the world in all hearts open to receive.

The Eucharist sends us forth confident, healed and grateful, no longer isolated in what St. Augustine would call our “private” love. We partner in solidarity with our Lover and each other in “social love.” We are ready to evangelize! We do so, however, not necessarily by pounding the pavement but by going back to the beginning of this essay - by staying still. The true “exodus” starts within but then sends us outward.

SOME PERSONAL AND PASTORAL APPLICATIONS OF THE JOURNEY FROM EROS TO AGAPE EROTIC LOVE IN AN ADDICTIVE SOCIETY

Many writers and therapists suggest that the culture of the Western World is “obsessive-compulsive.” We are “wired” for addiction. We crave for “completeness.” And so we become workaholics or exercise freaks. We get deeply “stuck” in

relationships and attachments that do not always correspond to our life commitments. Our natural appetites for certain foods, drink and ways of relaxing become urgent necessities that end up isolating us from the love we actually crave.

In our digital age, most of us spend a fair amount of time staring at a screen. It is safer to relate to people from the comfort of a certain distance, not necessarily having to look them in the eye and allow them to hear the uncertainty and anxiousness in our voice. Sometimes it is easy enough to create a totally separate world which further insulates us from genuine communication or self-revelation. Soon enough “reality” becomes a fantasy life through the Internet and we get caught in the whirl of pornography, gambling or just wasting time.

In erotic love, quite often everything becomes “I-it” rather than “I-Thou.” I can control an “it” but not a “thou!” Virtual “relationships” are much easier than the old-fashioned reality of an imperfect, irritating partner. An “it” cannot hurt me or disappoint me but a “thou” inevitably will!

All of the above descriptions of our life today are basically manifestations of erotic love. We tend to think of eros in terms of the tingling of sexual fantasy, but actually it is much more complex and demanding: eros is about unhealthy attachments that

prevent us from being fully human, vulnerable and open, compassionate and generous. Good questions to ask ourselves might be the following: Is there anything that prevents me from being free? What relationships or things end up “controlling” my daily schedule? Can I look at things and other people with eyes of awe and wonder, and appreciation without needing to possess? Simply put, can I let go? When things “devolve” on their own, can I accept with peaceful serenity the limitations of health or the loss of resources, opportunities or relationships?

Perhaps an interesting way to answer these questions and to deepen our own spiritual relationship with the Lord and others might be by meditating on certain parables of Jesus. For instance, the parable of the workers hired at different hours in Matthew 20: no one seemed comfortable that one same denarius was being given to all. Instead of rejoicing with and for each other, there was a lot of comparing which only led to envy and anger. In our “all or nothing” society, we can carry those perspectives over to our relationship with God and others. It is challenging to live in today’s society with a Gospel vision that is about “space for grace for all” and “the economy of gift.” The parable of the Last Judgement (Matthew 25) reminds us of the necessity of recognizing our Divine Lover in the faces of every person.

THE EUCHARIST AS MODEL OF THE JOURNEY

While eros tells us fulfillment comes by “filling ourselves,” agape stirs our conscience and heart to remind us that everything is a gift confided to us for only a short time and that paradoxically, the more we give away, the more we will receive! This indeed is the process of the Holy Eucharist. Consider the Eucharist from the perspective of what we have written in this article: every celebration of the Eucharist is a process of self-emptying so as to receive and then more self-emptying as we go forth in service.

FRIENDSHIP LOVE, UNFOLDING OF AGAPE

As we move from eros, friendships become more

mature. When I was a student in Rome 40 years ago, the two Jesuit professors who taught Christian Anthropology (themselves good friends) suggested that a contemporary image for the relationship between God and us might be friendship. They reasoned that while the relationship of God as parent is Scriptural and time-honored, perhaps it does not challenge us to take full adult responsibility, being vulnerable and forming a genuine partnership with Him. The love of friends can indeed be a window to God.

Many writers focus on the intimacy of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple and note that Jesus seemed to have a special gift for making other people feel bonded to Him in a way that went beyond deference to a spiritual master or rabbi. Did not Jesus Himself say “I no longer call you servants... instead I call you friends?” The friendship mode of relating to God and each other can often be a source of intense peace, for the gifts and needs of our friends call us out of our own comfort zone and we feel at home in their space even as they feel welcomed to share all that we are and all that we have. Friends listen with eagerness and share from the core of their being with total confidence. Friends are intimate and when the friendship is truly moving toward agape love, it is capable of calling and drawing others to share in its joy. Friends are ready to sacrifice for each other without hesitation.

A few good questions for us to consider with regard to friendship love might be these: Can our friendship withstand the “test” of separation of time and space? Is there anything that I am afraid to tell my BFF? Is there anything that he/she might be anxious about sharing with me? Does our friendship open itself to welcome in others or do we see them as intruders? Perhaps we could meditate on the image of the Beloved Disciple resting in the bosom of Jesus at the Last Supper. Think of the tears Jesus shed as He stood outside the tomb of His friend Lazarus. Maybe we could find delight identifying with Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Or perhaps we could place ourselves in the role of Peter with the Lord

squatting at our smelly, dirty feet, looking up at us with a twinkle in His eye, touched with sadness and profound affection: a transitional moment from friendship to agape!

AGAPE HOLDS THE TENSION

As we have stated throughout, love is about space for the other; the more pure the love, the greater the space for hospitality and acceptance of all, especially the vulnerable, marginalized and otherwise forgotten or despised. Pope Francis repeatedly challenges us to move beyond spatial categories and never forget that love is also a “stewardship” of time: to be with the other, especially the stranger. Our society and Church today are very polarized. It seems that one of the unique qualities of agape love most needed today is the ability to “hold the tension” of diverse opinions, experiences and viewpoints. Consider for example the ministry of Sister Helen Prejean as relayed in the film and opera *Dead Man Walking*: at one and the same time, in a God-like fashion, she seeks to hold the pain of angry parents who have lost a child and on the other hand, she seeks to bring healing to the dying criminal accused of the very crime.

In agape love, there is enormous “space for grace.” Such is the Trinitarian Communion of love – the infinite “distance” between the Father and the Son wherein dwells the Holy Spirit. We are invited into that holy space within their Trinitarian love! We ourselves cannot “hold the tension” but we can place into God’s hands the brokenness and pain of all. Often agape love is the time spent in silence when words are not possible.

As Pope Francis reminds us in his eloquent meditation of I Corinthians 13 in his Apostolic Exhortation, God’s agape love is perfectly patient, and long-suffering, inviting us to rejoice in the truth and to see ourselves – even with our faults and weaknesses – the way God sees us. Yes, perhaps the greatest challenge is to believe that agape love is directed at each of us even though we may feel unworthy. It is a pure mystery, a gift beyond belief.

But to accept the gift, I have to let go of control or trying to impress or earn this gift. God does not want performance. God’s love seeks a grateful receiver.

Agape love is truly counter cultural – even for “professional,” life-long Christians. It takes a lifetime of “letting go” to let agape love take hold at the core of our being. Agape love dawns upon us, within us and through us as we are empty. In the emptiness, we find God. In the darkness a new light emerges. In the silence, the Word of Love is spoken. Love. Actually! Perhaps the best meditation text for agape love might be the prologue of John’s Gospel, remembering that every time we see “the Word” we can simply insert “Love.” Alternatively, meditate on John 15, the vine and the branches: God’s love pulses through us and makes us capable of bearing fruit. Or again, John 21, the conversation of Jesus and Peter: “Do you love me as friend? Do you love me as a mysterious presence/absence? Do you love me more than all these things and people?”

St. Paul ends his eloquent hymn on love by reminding us that “we will know even as we are known.” In the end, for love to “work,” we must let ourselves be known by God and others. To “arrive” at agape love with God and others – even for a few brief moments now and again here on Earth – we must go the way of self-revelation, the way Jesus took when He came to dwell among us.

A CONCLUDING PARABLE

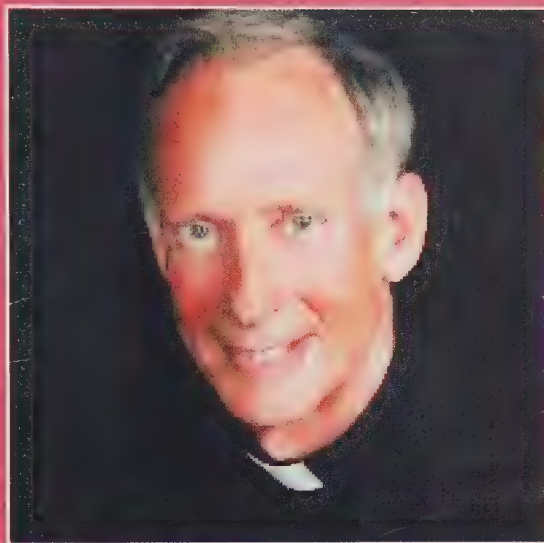
Perhaps the best witness to the journey of eros to agape is the story of the “Whiskey Priest” in Graham Greene’s famous novel *The Power and the Glory*. The Whiskey Priest dealt with an obvious addiction to alcohol but he was also haunted by the need to be needed and the subtle pride that drove him on from town to town because he knew God’s people deserved and craved sacramental care. His motives were always mixed and somewhat confused. But even with all that “agenda,” his heart was restless and empty, exhausted by his fugitive existence. When he was finally caught, “the game” was up. No more

wiggle room. In a powerful scene in prison, on his last night on Earth, he voiced a most sincere prayer, telling God he felt like a failure because he had to go to Him empty-handed.

I suggest Graham Green is offering us a parable. Every one of us could be that Whiskey Priest struggling with our “eros,” wanting to love and be loved. In the end, we are purified and defined not by successes but by all our losses, our apparent failures and chronic struggles. Stripped of every pretext or vestige of power, our true dignity shines forth! At such a moment we are ready for agape love. Stripped of everything else, our eternal value and ultimate goodness shine forth.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Love is about purifying desire. Most often that purification does not happen by our deliberate choice; usually it happens as we deal with loss, separation, illness or apparent failure. Love seems to become more genuine and “real” as we experience diminishment and vulnerability. Do I see that pattern in all the loving relationships of my life? How has some “de-formation” actually helped me discover a more pure love of God or neighbor?
2. The most difficult person to love is the person we see in the mirror each day! Can I believe that I am truly “most” loved by God when I am the most weak and vulnerable? Consider the Apostle Peter and his three denials of the Lord and resistance to having his feet washed. Think about the “Whiskey Priest” and the way he died. Do I “let” others “know” me so that I can be loved in full truth?
3. What eros attraction or desire is holding me back from freedom at this time in my life?
4. Can I recall a time when I felt God’s agape love flowing upon me and through me?
5. How have my friendships helped me know God’s love?
6. Agape love is patient; in many ways the “test” of true love is patience. Where do I stand on that score?




ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ordained July 1, 1978 for the Archdiocese of Detroit, Msgr. John Zenz received a Doctorate in Spirituality from the Gregorian University in Rome in 1984. He served in various capacities in the Archdiocese including Moderator of the Curia, Vicar General and Episcopal Vicar for one of the four Regions of the Archdiocese. Since 2008 he has been pastor of Holy Name Parish, Birmingham. He became Executive Editor of Human Development Magazine in May 2015.



“HOW DO I LOVE THEE?” -A BIBLICAL REFLECTION

Donald Senior, C.P.



“HOW DO I LOVE THEE?”

is the question posed in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's famous Sonnet 43 which speaks so beautifully of the qualities of deep and enduring human love:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

*I love thee to the depth and breadth and
height*

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of being and ideal grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right.

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

*In my old griefs, and with my childhood's
faith.*

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

*With my lost saints, I love thee with the
breath,*

*Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God
choose,*

I shall but love thee better after death.

The quest to love and be loved is at the heart of human experience. Without love, our lives can become bitter and meaningless. Beyond the desire to love and be loved, we also need to ask ourselves what are the qualities of authentic love? How might we recognize it? What is true love as distinct from a passing fancy or just an expression of my own self-gratification? Love language can even be so distorted that it can be cited while one is actually wounding the one proclaimed as an object of love. Or, similarly, gratifications of one's desires—even when toxic and self-destructive—can be thought of as “being good to or loving oneself” when in actuality it is a form of self-hatred.

LOVE IN THE BIBLE

The conviction that love is the core experience of human life and the question of what constitutes authentic love stand at the heart of the Scriptures. The saga of Israel portrayed in the Old Testament can be seen as one long and complex love affair between Yahweh and his people. This is a point made repeatedly in the Book of Deuteronomy: “It was not because you are more numerous than all the peoples that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you; for you are really the smallest of all peoples. It was because the Lord loved you and because of his fidelity to the oath he had sworn to your ancestors, that the Lord brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery...” (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

This focus on love is at the center of traditional Jewish faith, as expressed in the great Shema or creed of Israel, still recited twice daily in the synagogue. The Hebrew word *shema* means to “hear” or “listen” and it is taken from the first word of this key text: “Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating

them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them on your arm as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Jesus, as a devout Jew, knew this passage by heart. Jesus cites it in Mark's Gospel (Mark 12:28-34) when a scribe approaches him seeking the truth, asking, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replies by reciting the Shema—“loving the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” but, significantly, goes on to add: “The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.’” In his monumental study of the historical Jesus, John Meier observes that the fusion of these two commands—the Shema from Deuteronomy 6 and the command to love your neighbor from Leviticus 19:18—is an authentic contribution of Jesus to Jewish reflection on the Mosaic Law (The Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Vol. IV. Law and Love. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). The implication is that God's love for us and our love for God find their true expression and authenticity in our love for others.

This conviction is noted repeatedly in the gospels. In an incident found only in Luke's Gospel (Luke 10:25-37), a lawyer poses for Jesus the same question the scribe did in Mark's account. Here, though, we discover that the intention of the lawyer is not to learn from Jesus but “to test” him. When he asks Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus challenges him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” The lawyer correctly responds not only with the Shema about complete love of God but adds what Jesus himself had been teaching, “... and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus confirms the man's correct answer and adds, “do this and you will live.” But, of course, since the lawyer was really

trying to trip Jesus up, he asks a further question: “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus responds with one of the best known of his parables, that of the Good Samaritan. The compassionate action of the Samaritan—in contrast to the priest and Levite—defines what love of neighbor means: he cares for the injured traveler, binding up his wounds, and, out of his own funds, makes sure he will be nursed back to health. In this remarkable passage, Jesus not only confirms the central command of the Hebrew Scriptures but defines in practical terms the quality of love we are talking about: practical, authentic, compassionate, self-transcending. While Jews of that period may have held Samaritans in low esteem, Jesus’ story challenges those assumptions by telling of a Samaritan who knew how to love as God loves.

Anyone who has reflected on the gospels knows that the heart of Jesus’ teaching is self-transcending love. Not “self-transcending” in a demeaning, self-abasing way, but love that is able to move beyond absorption with one’s own immediate needs and to reach out in loving attentiveness to the other. In Elizabeth Browning’s poetic words: “I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach...”

The gospels find the ultimate expression of this quality of love paradoxically in the manner of Jesus’ death. All of the love expressed in his healing touch, in his patient love for his disciples, in his defense of the poor and marginalized, is distilled into the love that drove Jesus to the cross. Jesus’ death, from the point of view of the gospel drama, comes about precisely because of the way he lived. Mark makes this point in a dramatic way. After a series of healings and associations with the people “on the margin” such as Levi the tax collector and his unsavory friends (see Mark 2:15-17), Jesus publicly heals a man with a withered arm in the synagogue on the Sabbath. This bold action pushes Jesus’ enemies to plot his death: “The Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him to put him to death” (Mark 3:6). In Jesus’ own

words, his giving of his life was an act of loving service or *diakonia* on behalf of others: “The Son of Man has come not to be served but to serve, to give his life in ransom for the many” (Mk 10:45).

John’s Gospel further distills this conviction by portraying Jesus’ entire ethical teaching as a “love command.” The disciple of Jesus is to “love as I have loved you” (John 15:12) and the fullest expression of such love “is to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” The “laying down of life”—“losing one’s life to save it” in the idiom of the Synoptic Gospels—is a gospel metaphor to express both the quality of God’s forgiving and redeeming love for us and, in turn, the pattern for our authentic love of God and of one another.

Even more startling, in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells his disciples that the ultimate expression of human love is the ability to love one’s enemy (Matthew 5:43-48). This kind of love goes beyond the reciprocal love we might expect from our family and friends—who love us as we love them. Love of the enemy reflects the purely gracious and self-transcending love of God and makes one truly a child of God, “for He makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.” (5:45). In the first discourse of John’s Gospel, Jesus reveals to Nicodemus both the purpose of Jesus’ mission and the quality of God’s love for the world: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but may have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:16-17).

THE REALITY OF SELF-TRANSCENDING LOVE: JESUS AND PAUL

The affirmations of God’s love for us and our call to love God and each other in the same manner fill both the Old and the New Testaments. But what are the practical symptoms of such love? How do

we move from elegant verbal affirmations of love to understand its reality in our everyday lives? We can think of the famous song from the Broadway musical “Fiddler on the Roof” when Tevye repeatedly asks his wife Golde, “Do you love me?” Her reply is not sentimental or romantic but down to earth, concrete: “Do I love you? For twenty-five years I’ve washed your clothes, cooked your meals, cleaned your house, given you children, milked the cow... Do I love him? For twenty-five years I’ve lived with him, fought him, starved with him. Twenty-five years my bed is his. If that’s not love, what is?”

Recently, Pope Francis set out—admittedly in a very different mode than “Fiddler on the Roof”—to also ask the question about what is love, in his beautiful exhortation, “*Amoris Laetitia—The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family*.” The Pope wrote this text as a response to the General Synod on Marriage and the Family that took place in two sessions from fall, 2014 to fall, 2015. In one of the remarkable passages of this Exhortation, the Pope offers a detailed study of chapter 13 of Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians (see *Amoris Laetitia*, chapter 4, pars. 89-119), the famous “hymn to Charity” one of the most well-known and frequently quoted passages of Paul’s letters. The Pope analyses this passage at some length and delves into the meaning of specific Greek words in a detailed manner seldom seen in Papal documents. His goal is not only to base his reflections on married love in the Scriptures but also to spell out the realities of authentic and sustained married love—what he terms love “that never gives up.”

It is significant that Pope Francis turns to Paul’s writings to illustrate what love means from a Christian perspective. More often commentators turn to the example of Jesus in the gospels as defining what love truly means. Paul, on the other hand, is considered by many to have submerged or blunted Jesus’ teaching on the love command. In a recent



book Patrick Gray has traced this kind of negative estimation of Paul (see *Paul as a Problem in History and Culture: The Apostle and His Critics through the Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016). Paul has often been called “the second founder of Christianity”—not as a compliment but as an accusation that the Apostle created a brand of religion that distorted or even ignored Jesus’ teaching on love and mercy. For example, the acerbic British playwright George Bernard Shaw asserted, “No sooner had Jesus knocked over the dragon of superstition than Paul boldly set it on its legs again...He (Paul) does nothing that Jesus would have done, and says nothing that Jesus would have said” (*italics mine!*). A modern scholar Stephen Mitchell contends, “He [Paul] didn’t understand



Jesus at all. He wasn't even interested [italics original] in Jesus... We can feel in the writings of Paul the Christian some of the same egotism, superstition, and intolerance that marred the character of Saul the Pharisee." Even Mahatma Gandhi weighs in against Paul: "I draw a great distinction between the Sermon on the Mount and the Letters of Paul."

These examples of animosity toward Paul can be multiplied. It leaves one wondering if these critics had actually ever read Paul's Letters! Surely they overlooked the passage that the Pope quotes from 1 Corinthians—which is one among many passages in his letters where Paul reflects on love of God and love of neighbor. One can easily make the case that Paul, like Jesus and because of Jesus, placed love of God and neighbor at the very heart and soul

of the Christian life. As Paul proclaims without hesitation: "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet, and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:8-10).

And for Paul, God's love for us is both the origin and final destiny of human life. He notes in Romans 5:8, that God's redeeming and compassionate love – a pure gift - is what gives us life in the first place: "But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." And that same love guided Paul through the anguish and setbacks of his mission and gave him an enduring hope: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

PAUL'S HYMN TO LOVE

Pope Francis' instinct is right in turning to 1 Corinthians 13 as a prime illustration of what Paul means by authentic Christian love. The Pope justifiably cites Paul to illustrate the meaning of love within a Christian marriage. However, in the original context of his letter, Paul was not referring solely to conjugal love as such but to the quality of love that should bind together all of the members of the Christian community. The lyrical description in Chapter 13 comes as the climax of a series of steps that Paul takes in his letter, triggered by a pastoral problem that had been reported to him. In chapter 11 of the letter Paul is distressed to learn that when the Corinthian community gathers to celebrate the Lord's Supper that instead of it being a celebration of unity it had become a display of dis-unity. The

wealthier members were apparently bringing their own elaborate food and drink to enjoy as part of their celebration, even drinking wine to excess, while other, poorer members, had nothing to eat or drink. As a result, the rich were embarrassing the poor and driving a wedge between them.

Paul's immediate response is to remind his turbulent Corinthian community about the origin and fundamental meaning of the Lord's Supper. It was rooted in the sacred Passover meal that Jesus had celebrated with his disciples on the eve of his death, where the bread and the wine were declared by Jesus to be his own Body and Blood given totally out of love for all, a meal to be celebrated by his disciples as a living and dynamic memory of that act of redemptive love (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Paul asks the Corinthians: How can people celebrate such a meal while at the same time embarrassing the poor—the ones Jesus loved and for whom he gave his life?

As he continues his letter, Paul's response to this serious pastoral problem triggers further reflection on the meaning of Christian community. The apostle speaks of the community as a harmony of gifts bound together and animated by one Spirit: "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone" (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Thus using one's particular gifts and talents in a spirit of competition or self-aggrandizement is contrary to the very nature of the Christian community and the kind of love that should bind us together in one Spirit.

This reflection on the harmony of gifts leads Paul to another powerful metaphor. The Christian community is the "Body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Although the comparison of the civic community to a body with many parts was commonplace in the Greco-Roman world, Paul's use of this image is far more radical. His conviction that through Baptism, the Christian becomes one with Christ and lives "in Christ" leads him to think of the Church as the one "Body of Christ," not simply in metaphorical terms but as a metaphysical reality. The Christians are the Body of Christ—each individual believer a member of Christ's Body and therefore bound together in a fundamental way. Therefore, no single member can exist or have a purpose apart from the whole of the Body.

Paul concludes that not only should we live without divisions, but even more, we must have mutual concern for each other because we are one. Reflecting even further, St. Paul notes that as members of this Body of Christ - a crucified and risen body - the "weaker" members are "all the more necessary" and members whom others may view as "less honorable," deserve to be "surrounded with greater honor." In Paul's own words: "God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy."

Paul's reflections on the Christian community as a harmony of gifts, as one Body of Christ, culminate in

"Paul concludes that not only should we live without divisions, but even more, we must have mutual concern for each other because we are one."

his hymn to charity. Pulsating through this harmony of gifts in one Spirit and this Body of Christ whose members care for each other is the essential gift of love, the “more excellent way” as Paul describes it (1 Corinthians 12:31).

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

As Pope Francis notes in his reflection on this passage in *Amoris Laetitia*, it is important to pay attention to the qualities Paul uses to define love. Missing are lofty or sentimental words. Instead, Paul’s language reflects the hard-earned experience of enduring love. In the Hebrew of the Old Testament God’s patient and enduring love of Israel, despite

its repeated failures and infidelities, is called *hesed*, often translated as “faithful” or “steadfast” love. When Paul’s descriptors for love are put together they picture just this kind of love. Such love is “patient,” “kind,” “bearing all things,” “believes all things,” “hopes all things,” “endures all things.” But equally revealing is what such love is not: it is “not jealous,” “not pompous,” “not inflated,” “not rude,” “does not seek its own interests,” “is not quick-tempered,” “does not brood over injury,” “does not rejoice over wrongdoing.”

This passage from Paul is frequently chosen as a reading for Catholic weddings. I suspect that the kind of love Paul describes resonates more with the veteran couples who attend the wedding than with the newly-wed couple who have yet to experience what long term faithful love will entail! And for Paul this kind of patient, enduring and forgiving love characterizes God’s love for Israel as it does the Risen Christ’s love for his Church. And, remarkably, it is

YOUR LEGACY LIVES ON...



Estate Gifts notably impact the ministry of Guest House. Creating a gift through your will or trust is a meaningful way to leave a legacy that will make a difference for the greater good of the Catholic Church.

Your estate gift can support a specific area or program, such as education or scholarships.

Guest House offers treatment to all Catholic clergy and religious regardless of their ability to afford care.

We provide nearly \$1 million annually in uncompensated care to those in need.

PLEASE CONTACT

Erika Walker, Guest House Development,
for more information about creating a legacy
gift that reflects your wishes

248-393-8933 or ewalker@guesthouse.org



this brand of love that is to also characterize the love that Christians are to have for each other and for the world they are called to serve.

CONCLUSION: LEARNING TO LOVE

Even when cast in the practical terms of Paul's description, leading such a life of love is a daunting task for each of us. All of us fail, even as we yearn to be loving people and to be loved. For Paul, as for his master Jesus, leading a life animated by authentic, self-transcending love requires a constant process of conversion. Conversion means turning away from those habits of the heart that make us indifferent to the needs of others and leave us self-absorbed; a constant reminder of the words and witness of Pope Francis, who decries our "culture of indifference," toward the needs of the poor and vulnerable. But conversion also means turning toward a life expressive of the gospel.

To effect such a "conversion of heart" means being reflective about the ways we treat others, sometimes without even realizing it. Regularly examining our conscience is a wise and necessary Christian practice. It also entails noting—and imitating--the good example of the everyday "saints" around us who act with generosity and care toward others. But, above all, we need to be completely empowered by

God's love, not just our own; that is, impelled by the Holy Spirit. The power of the Spirit can, first of all, transform our thinking so that we can see more clearly what it means to be a child of God and to love in the manner of Jesus. This is what Paul called "putting on the mind of Christ" (see Phil 2:5). The Spirit also gives us the will and the strength to love authentically. Without the Spirit we would not even be able to pray. Paul insists (Rom 8:26-27), that it is the Spirit who works within us, despite our failings, to make us truly daughters and sons of God: "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (Rom 8:14).

I would add to St. Paul's listing: "love is never finished." Love is always a work-in-progress, a thousand daily choices, living the "routine" with tenderness and reflective awareness, always looking for new ways to express itself and ever-attentive and open to each new gift being offered to us. The circle deepens and widens at the same time as we hear the question and answer it again and again:

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways..."
How do we love you Lord? How do you love us?
Only you can possibly count the ways!!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. In his article, Fr. Senior said that “love drove Jesus to the cross” – a beautiful expression of Jesus’ absolute openness to the Holy Spirit. How have I experienced the movement of God’s love propelling me forward – perhaps into a mission I would not have chosen? How is God’s love within me (and within others) moving me/us beyond my own comfort zone into even greater self-gift for others?
2. Fr. Senior lists qualities of “authentic” love in Scripture: practical, compassionate, self-transcending and willing to embrace even an enemy. How does my love “measure up” to these qualities? Can I think of a specific time I truly loved an enemy? Have I ever experienced someone who had been an “enemy” trying to change and show love? Could I accept it?
3. In I Corinthians, St. Paul makes a strong, clear, direct connection between loving Christ and loving the whole Body of Christ. Is my own spiritual life truly sensitive to the communal reality of salvation? How might our parish better emphasize and celebrate that reality?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Donald Senior, C.P., is President Emeritus and Chancellor of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago (CTU), where he also serves as Professor of New Testament. A member of the Passionist Congregation, he was ordained a priest in 1967 and received his Doctorate in New Testament Studies from the University of Louvain in 1972, with advanced studies at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and Harvard University. He served as president of CTU for 23 years. He is a frequent lecturer and speaker throughout the United States and abroad. Fr. Senior has published extensively on biblical topics, with numerous books and articles for both scholarly and popular audiences. In 2001, Pope John Paul II appointed him as a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and he was reappointed in 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI and by Pope Francis in 2013.


I want You back.

God



TWO TIPS ON LOVE FROM THE PARABLES OF JESUS

John Shea



I GLADLY SEEK OUT TIPS OR ADVICE. They are gifts from others about what we might look for and what we might do. Even though they need to be tested against our own experience, they provide an angle of entry into whatever our agenda might be. I suggest we take two tips on love from the parables of Jesus. They come from the inspired witness of Christian revelation, and provide profound illumination and direction. When we follow their clues and put them in dialogue with contemporary experience and knowledge, we become people of the Word as well as people of our times.

REMEMBER BEING LOVED

The first tip comes from a parable on mercy (Mt. 18:23-35). Although its focus is mercy, the message can be applied to all positive experiences, especially love.

A servant owed a king 10,000 talents — huge. He begged to be forgiven, and the king forgave him. Then he meets a fellow servant who owes him

100 denarii — pittance in comparison. This fellow servant repeats the self-same words this man just said to the king. But the forgiven servant does not have any forgiveness in him. He throttles his fellow servant and sends him off to debtor's prison. When the other servants see this, they squeal to the king. The king calls in the servant whom he had forgiven. "You ruthless servant! I forgave you all that debt ... Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (Mt. 18: 32) Although there is more to the story in Matthew, both before and after this episode, the tip lurks in these exchanges.

Everyone seems to "get it" but the forgiven servant. The king and the other servants know the "burden" of being shown mercy is to be merciful to others. Why didn't the forgiven-unforgiving servant get this "pay it forward" connection?

THE PARABLE DOES NOT TELL US, BUT WE CAN GUESS

Perhaps the forgiven servant took his forgiveness lightly. He thought he got lucky. Or he flattered himself into thinking he perfectly played his pleading to the soft side of the king. Then, getting what he wanted, he promptly forgot the whole thing. He went about his business with the usual knee-jerk reaction of "pay me back or I will punish you."

Without memory and internalization, our positive experiences do not produce the positive result of passing them on to others. The Gospel imperative of "freely receiving, freely giving" is short-circuited. (Mt. 10:8) So often we freely receive, but then we freely forget. It is not enough to have the experience. We must reflect on the experience to allow it to change our mind and behavior.

Although in the parable this lesson on internalization focuses on mercy, it also can be applied to our experiences of love. The tip is simple but deceptively difficult to do.

Remember a time we were loved.
Host this time in our minds and hearts.
Ponder what it taught us.
Be grateful to the people who were involved.
Be on the lookout to give as we have received.

We should not be vague. Our memories are often dispositional, articulated in phrases like, "My mother loved me even when I was a pain." This may be shorthand for a series of experiences, but it does not facilitate the process of receiving and giving. We need to remember our experience as a story - description, dialogue, plot, point - and tell it to ourselves, and to anyone who might be interested and who we can corner.

"Well, we did it," my teacher announced one day in May when I was in eighth grade — years ago. "We finished the work for the year. Now we can have fun." We still had three weeks of school left, but Sr. Rosemary had whipped us through the second semester in record time and we had completed all the assigned material.

Fun for Sr. Rosemary was a never-ending series of spelling bees ("Don't forget to repeat the word before you try to spell it"), geography quizzes ("What is the capital of Nigeria?"), and speed math ("Alright, when I say 'go' turn the page and solve the problem. When you are finished, raise your hand.") Sister loved intellectual contests of all types — usually the boys pitted against the girls. Gender wars started early.

I felt all this busy work was really stupid. And I told people so —especially my mother. Those were the days when kids went home for lunch. As I ate and my mother

"We have the freedom to lift out of our past the smallest of incidents and allow them to influence our minds, feelings, and behaviors."

did things around the kitchen, I complained vociferously and daily. My mother was — as usual — firmly on Sr. Rosemary's side.

"Why do you think it is stupid?" she would ask. "Because it is," I'd reply. Did I have to explain the obvious? "Well it's only three weeks. Offer it up," she suggested. Now "offer it up" was Catholic code for "suffering can't be avoided, so you might as well get something good out of it." Rather than endure meaningless suffering, you could "offer it up" — usually for the "poor souls in purgatory." The idea was that you could gain merits by bearing suffering without complaint and then transfer the benefits to others who needed spiritual help. And nobody needed more help than the poor souls.

However, the redemptive use of my pain did not interest me. I continued my lunchtime assaults on Sr. Rosemary. Several times, my mother warned me that she didn't want to hear any more about it. But I kept it up.

One day, after a morning of supposedly "fun" quizzes, I launched a full scale attack on the "stupid" way we were wasting time. I was sitting at the table eating a sandwich and my mother was washing some dishes. She had her back to me, but I noticed her shoulders suddenly arch and move up toward her ears.

I had gotten to her, and I felt a sense of triumph. But then her shoulders relaxed. Without turning around, she said, "It'll just take a minute." She went into the bedroom and came out wearing a sweater. "Down in the basement," she ordered. I wanted to ask what was going on, but for once in my young life I thought I had best keep my mouth shut. In the basement, my mother pulled out her golf clubs. "Let's go," she said.

Totally confused, I picked up my own clubs and followed behind her. I was having trouble fathoming what was happening. It looked as if I was skipping school to play golf — with my mother no less. She was playing the person feared by every Catholic youth of the time: she was being a "bad companion," luring me away from responsibility.

We lived only six blocks from Columbus Park, a nine-hole Park District course. It cost a quarter for kids and seventy-five cents for adults. As we were walking over to the course, my mother chatted away about this and that. But she did not say one word about school or quizzes or



Sr. Rosemary or what we were doing. I kept quiet, waiting for another very large shoe to fall.

On the fourth hole, my mother was about to putt. She had a four-footer. I was holding the flag and waiting. She looked up from the ball and said, "We won't tell anybody about this." Then she smiled. She made the putt.

This is a simple, no-big-deal experience. Often we think it is only "landmark" experiences that can have lasting impact. However, that is not the case. We have the freedom to lift out of our past the smallest of incidents and allow them to influence our minds, feelings, and behaviors.

But we have to take the time to do this. The more I remember and ponder this experience the more it teaches me about the gestures of love that go deeper than words and the variety of ways we have to communicate our commitment to one another. How am I passing on this love I have received? What are the gestures that are the creative carriers of my love? Remembering this past time of being loved pushes me into my present relationships with the agenda of love.

We have within us past experiences that both motivate us to love as well as give indications of the skills we need to love. But we may have to rummage memory to find them. But the search is worthwhile. Otherwise, we might go the unaware way of the forgiven-unforgiving servant.

LOVE WHO GOD IS LOVING

The second tip comes from the Prodigal Son. (Lk. 15: 11-24) It complements the tip to remember being loved with a tip about who we are loving when we love others. The parable does not get into the nitty-gritty of tactics, but its vision of love is rare and radical.

To selectively shorten this well-known parable, here is the situation. A man has two sons. The younger son asks for his inheritance, and the father divides his living between his two sons. The younger one immediately goes into “riotous living” in a far country. He discovers the nature of money: it runs out.

Reduced to taking a job feeding pigs, he would eat with the pigs, but no one offered. The bottom.

At the bottom comes the brainstorm. “In my father’s house even the servants have enough to eat. I will go to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and you. Do not take me back as a Son, but as a hired hand.” Demotion script in place, he makes for the house of his father.

NOW LOVES APPEARS

While still a long way off, his father sees him, has compassion on him, and begins to run. He embraces him and kisses him.

The son begins to recite his rehearsed script with his reduced status. But the father will not let him finish. Instead, the father says to the servants, “Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. Kill the fatted calf, and let us eat and make merry. My son was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and now he is found.” There is more to the story, significantly more, but the tip has happened.

We are no strangers to the son’s hangdog script. It is one thing to screw up; and it is another thing to think you are the screw up. The real problem is not the riotous living or the company of pigs. It is thinking that these disasters have replaced the “son at the center.” But it is a mistake we have a tendency to make. We embrace what we have done wrong as our defining moment. Other people are only too willing to help us to do this to ourselves, never letting us get too far away from our egregious errors. We ink a pact of punishment in the secret center of ourselves.

The Father will have none of it. His first word is “Quick!” Something must be done before the prodigal’s temptation to identify with his negative mental and behavioral functioning is solidified. Perhaps, the robe, ring, shoes, feast, and the messages of eternal rebound — the lost are found and the dead come back to life — will do it. We are not told what the returning son’s response is. But the lesson is clear: the father never stops loving the son even when the son misidentifies who he is and stops loving himself.

The tip is: love who God is loving. God is not loving the conflicted mind or the estranged social environment. God is loving the deeper self — the soul, the image of God, the son and daughter of the Divine. When we are open to that love, it flows into and brings peace to the conflicted mind and reconciles estranged relationships. The strategies of the father remind us who we are and who we always will be. Grounded in that identity, we bring its Spirit into everything else we are and do in order to heal and renew the whole person.

We are called to join our love for others to the “place” where God is loving them. But this is no easy task. We get caught in the clamoring psychological, physical, and social dramas on their own terms. We do not know how to speak to the son and daughter beneath the hired hands. This is definitely because we lack experience and skills to contact the momentarily lost son and daughter. But we can get better at this by focusing on different experiences and developing different competencies.

However, there is a deeper consideration. Using a spiritual criterion, we see in others only what we know in ourselves. We must first realize that God is continually loving us in our “deeper self,” “higher self,” “transcendent self,” “bottommost self,” “secret self,” “real self,” etc. — whatever name we want to give it. We are more than our screw-ups; and if we know this about ourselves, we can see it in others. As we talk to the full person who

is a fused identity of son/daughter and hired hand, we focus on the son/daughter and talk and act, then reflect and evaluate, and then talk and act again. We want to say to ourselves and others Hafez’s words: “I wish I could show you when you are lonely or in darkness the astonishing light of your own being.” When it happens, it is the fragile beginning of new possibilities.

CONCLUSION

As Christians, we naturally consult the inspired scriptural witness and put it in dialogue with our experience and knowledge. We welcome these tips on love from the parables of Jesus. The parable of the forgiven-unforgiving servant suggests we consciously claim our autobiography of love as the motivation and skills needed to love others. The Prodigal Son suggests we learn to love others and ourselves in the very “space” where God is everlastingly loving us. These parables show a way. But only we can walk it.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. The “forgiven but unforgiving” servant of Matthew 18 had not “internalized” the mercy which had been directed toward him. John Shea suggests we all could profit from precise recollections of how we have been blessed by unexpected goodness; hopefully such memories will spark deeper gratitude within us. Try to think of one such occasion and see where it takes you.
2. In his reflection on the Prodigal Son, John Shea noted that we see and love in others only what we know in ourselves. Put another way, we will love others only to the extent we truly believe we are loved by God in our ugliness and brokenness. First we must be loved. Consider having a truly honest, open exchange wherein you share your vulnerabilities and experience loving acceptance.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Shea is a theologian and storyteller who lectures nationally and internationally on faith-based health care, contemporary spirituality, storytelling in world religions, and the spirit at work movement. Currently, he is a Senior Fellow of the Ministry Leadership Center which designs and implements formation programming for senior healthcare leaders of five west coast Catholic healthcare systems. Visit jackshea.org.



RELATIONAL LOVE IN A DIGITAL AGE

Susan Muto and Lori Mitchell McMahon



From the final clips of the movie *Casablanca*, as Rick declares to Louis that “this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship” — to the bonds between unforgettable characters such as Sam and Frodo in *Lord of the Rings*; Elizabeth and Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*; or Ruth and Naomi in the Old Testament, the sweep of human relationships has an allure and a fascination that are undeniable. Is it any wonder that Jesus calls us to love one another (John 13:34) and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31)? Christ touched people and he was touched by them. His Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, were not “virtual” realities: they were genuine human encounters revealing the heart, voice, and hands of our Redeemer. Believing in Jesus Christ and wanting to follow Him means that we cannot allow the virtual realities of our high-tech age to diminish the awesome mystery and full depth of Christian love.

Connections, commitment, and engagement have always been hallmarks of relational dynamics. But this subjects all these standards to rigorous challenges. Such challenges are not unique to Generation Y, for the explosion of networking and social media impacts all generations. Technology has become so integrated into human experience that there is no turning back. How, then, do we navigate the new virtual landscape, especially when it affects our ways of loving and connecting? No one has all the answers; in fact, all we are guaranteed is ever new questions and challenges.

DYNAMICS OF INTIMACY, PRIVACY, AND COMMUNION

The human heart longs for intimacy. Authentic intimacy can express itself in many ways, from a loving gaze to shared laughter, from a simple touch to sexual expression, from vulnerable disclosures to a reciprocity of understanding, from a peaceful, mutual silence to an in-depth conversation. In his science, anthropology, and theology of formation, Adrian van Kaam, CSSp, PhD (1920 - 2007) described intimacy as being related to "...the need for the other, going beyond mere physical involvement, that hungers for the other as a unique expression of the formation mystery that loves and embraces us" (van Kaam, Adrian. *Human Formation*, Volume Two: Formative Spirituality Series, New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985, p.84). In van Kaam's thinking, intimacy is transcendent insofar as it goes beyond mere casual encounter, as we are drawn beyond ourselves. Intimacy is built on the belief that it is possible to share with a trusted other, even things otherwise unspeakable, things revealing God's action and presence in our joys and sorrows.

The revelation of our own interiority calls forth the revelation of another's heart and soul. Van Kaam identifies shared vulnerability as our "intrasphere." The reciprocity of shared intraspheres presses us to expand the boundaries of our interiority — to allow someone to share feelings and motives that we have not shared with anyone else. While we cannot totally share our full uniqueness with anyone (God alone can penetrate the full mystery of our being) we can share certain

aspects of our interiority; we invite each other to accept, respect and treasure each other's gifts and talents. Through growing intimacy, we become more aware of each other's mystery — the deepest ground of our being. Yet even if we wanted it to be possible, the deepest human intimacy can never adequately disclose the mystery we are. Aware of these limitations, we still seek to grant certain friends access to three hidden regions of our intrasphere. Through such encounters interformative intimacy and community begin to emerge.

True and authentic relating, therefore, involves a blending of solitude (who I am) and solidarity (who we are together). To freely share mutual understanding and empathy is to experience the grace of being one and being with. True intimacy never degenerates into fusion; on the contrary, intimate interformation occurs when two or more persons are "with" one another without losing themselves "in" one another. Intimacy honors the ebb and flow of presence and absence. If we are fortunate enough in a lifetime to find one or two true deep friends, then we know from experience of communion, mutual understanding, empathy, and affinity. We can neither coerce nor plan communion, friendship or intimacy; these dynamics spring up spontaneously and gradually; they thrive through long-standing, shared history. No digital technology can automatically generate such fully human and spiritual experiences.

INTIMACY AND PRIVACY

Sharing facets of our private life creates a special bond. The dynamics of intimacy depend

"...the need for the other, going beyond mere physical involvement, that hungers for the other as a unique expression of the formation mystery that loves and embraces us."



upon the dynamics of privacy and communion; authentic intimacy respects appropriate boundaries, providing us the space to integrate our private and communal orientations. Absence of privacy-boundaries can easily threaten the possibility of true intimacy; remembering that our relational life lies at the crossroads between privacy and disclosure, we cannot underestimate the value of privacy. In this article, we will attempt to shed light on how social media can easily compromise the dynamics of privacy, true intimacy, and the vibrancy of authentic relationships.

Privacy-related complexity and confusion have arisen on many levels -- media platforms and policies as well as concerns of employment law, business practices, marketing policies, and health care. In this article we will focus on privacy as a disposition of the heart. Privacy cannot be sacrificed on the chopping block of social media, since it safeguards the deepest ground of our interiority. A well-formed privacy disposition respects the mystery and uniqueness of another's deepest personhood as an expression of the benevolence of God, and acknowledges every soul's dignity.

Our intrasphere involves a sacred covenant that will outlast time. It also fosters, in a unique way, our capacity for presence to God. It is the inner sanctum where our hearts are able to perceive the Spirit in the depth and mystery of our own life experience and in the story of other's lives. The hidden treasure of our private life can never be captured by updated postings on social media! A refined and nuanced disposition of the heart, privacy requires a lifetime for its unfolding; privacy protects and safeguards our interiority and allows us the space for creative reflection and physical restoration. We will now consider this much needed space against the backdrop of the demands and dynamics that social media have introduced into our world.

From Facebook to Twitter, LinkedIn to MySpace, social media sites have virtually exploded in the last two decades. For the purposes of this article, we define social media as any platform for sharing, creating or exchanging information and ideas via networks or virtual communities. This type of sharing is distinctive because of its global expanse, its immediacy in real-time, and its permanence once it has become embedded in cyberspace. Examples include Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, Twitter and Pinterest. Types of sharing across these platforms may be business-oriented or research/market based, but a significant percentage of cyberspace usage is dedicated to myriad forums for personal sharing, including videos, photos, tweets, you-tube links, and Facebook posts, as well as the familiar email and texting applications. Each of these platforms involve the disclosure of personal information (not to mention social networking sites explicitly dedicated to fostering relationships, such as eHarmony and other match-making sites.)

Statistics regarding online / internet activity reveal astonishing by-the-minute usage numbers. "Facebook is a true phenomenon in terms of the media it generates and shares on behalf of its 1.44 billion monthly active users. Those users send an average of 31.25 million messages and view 2.77 million

videos every minute, according to statistics released by Facebook in March” (Kapko, Matt. 7 staggering social media use by-the-minute stats. CIO from IDG; April 28, 2015; <http://www.cio.com/article/2915592/social-media/7-staggering-social-media-use-by-the-minute-stats.html#slide2>). Presently, we generate over 500 million tweets per day; in Twitter’s short history, we went from 5,000 tweets per day in 2007 to 500,000,000 tweets per day in 2013, which represents a six orders-of-magnitude increase (Internet Live Stats, Twitter Usage Statistics.<http://www.internetlivestats.com/twitter-statistics/>). Completely unprecedented is our capacity to share personal and unique content globally, instantaneously, and permanently. The demographics of social media reflect that its usage spans a full spectrum of educational backgrounds, age groups, and income levels. The “social media effect” captures the complexity, permanence, and vastness of the spread of content posted in cyberspace. It took radio 38 years to reach 50 million users; yet Facebook added over 200 million users in less than a year (Soya, Toma: Facebook as a Social Media, May 12, 2015; <https://prezi.com/z2xbtpbrqgf/facebook-as-a-social-media/>).

In short, every minute of every day, email users send 150 million messages; Facebook users tally over 700,000 logins; over half a million photos are posted in cyberspace; and 51,000 app downloads are tallied in Apple’s app store (Desjardins, Jeff. What Happens in an Internet Minute in 2016?; Visual Capitalist, April 26, 2016; <http://www.visualcapitalist.com/what-happens-internet-minute-2016/>). The sheer volume and complexity of content leaves us breathless. And there are no signs of slowing; in fact, the data just keep growing. At this time there are an estimated 2.1 billion members of the global Internet population — leaving data trails and, in some measure, disclosure of their privacy, everywhere they go.

The enormity of the phenomenon of social networking generates many challenges for human beings attempting to live in authentic relationship with others, and also aspiring to

foster a balanced exercise of self-disclosure and privacy. Two particular challenges are daunting in this regard, and we will explore them further in the remainder of this article.

CHALLENGE 1: EROSION OF PRIVACY IN A CULTURE OF NARCISSISM

Much of the content posted on social media can be related, in some measure, to self-disclosure. Posts in Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat applications, involve frequent status updates. Eating a piece of cake, taking a ride in a car, or going shopping at the mall have become the subject of innumerable updates that endeavor to elevate everyday, ordinary tasks and activities to something unique or extraordinary. Users may become obsessed with self-posts, tagging themselves in photos, and engaging in multiple practices that promote themselves on the web.

In a growing culture of narcissism, “it’s all about me.” Consider, for example, the selfie epidemic. In the first generation to grow up with the internet, selfies are vying to become one of the most popular genres of photography. In visiting a World Heritage Site or a phenomenal scenic overlook, we are most likely overrun with mobile phone users, perhaps with selfie stick in hand, snapping photos of themselves against a scenic backdrop. And many of these selfie shots invariably end up on other social media sites, soliciting feedback from others. Another example is the preponderance of the use of “my” in naming websites and online venues: MySpace is the most prominent example, but we can also consider the many my.rewards sites (for airplane miles and credit cards), and even mycoke.com for Coca-Cola consumers. “Internet domain names beginning with ‘my’ nearly tripled between 2005 and 2008, and trademark applications with ‘my’ quintupled in the ten years between 1998 and 2008 (Twenge, Jean and Campbell, W. Keith. *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement*. New York: Free Press, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.; 2009, p 107).

The 24/7 connectedness enabled by social

media, as well as the narcissism that it facilitates, pose significant challenges for our exercise of privacy; our narcissistic culture runs counter to the notion of committing to, and appreciating, our own rich interiority that needs time and space to be fostered and nurtured. The notions of authentic relating and the fostering of one's own interiority are especially counter-cultural to the pre-teen and teenage culture, as this population has been formed by the 24/7 "culture of connectedness" for most of their lives.

Facebook reports that its users have uploaded more than 250 billion photos, and are uploading 350 million new photos each day. To put that into perspective, that would mean that each of Facebook's 1.15 billion users have uploaded an average of 217 photos apiece. These numbers do not include photo uploads on Instagram (Smith, Cooper. Facebook Users Are Uploading 350 Million New photos Each Day. Business Insider, September 18, 2013; <http://www.businessinsider.com/facebook-350-million-photos-each-day-2013-9?IR=T>). It seems to go without saying that the epidemic of "narcissism" or self-fascination is further propelled by the multitude of posting opportunities afforded by many and varied social media sites. This is problematic in terms of the dynamics of disclosure and a well-formed privacy disposition, for it disrupts often unrecognized but urgently needed space for formation in solitude and solidarity. Our lives are a constant juxtaposition of sharing and withholding, and social media introduces significant challenges to a balanced integration of these dynamics.

Social media users may even become so preoccupied with the projection of their own images and life situations that privacy itself seems to be an aberration — no longer an essential condition for the very possibility of growing in human and spiritual maturity. Because of the preponderance of self-disclosed content that exists on the web, it is important to take a step back and ask ourselves — what is the price we pay for incessant posting, updating, tweeting, and snap-chatting? In these

numerous practices of disclosing seemingly innocuous information about our everyday life and activity, where is there room to practice silence, retreat into our own intrasphere of privacy, enjoy replenishment or restoration, or ponder the stirrings of our heart?

Social media and the narcissistic phenomena of posting also spawn many opportunities for false or "instant" intimacy. In the world of cyber-relations, obsession with updates and casual postings may begin to replace the experience of genuine friendship and formative communion, where respect for the innermost center of who we are (privacy) celebrates the mutual care we show for one another (intimacy). Our capacity for true intimacy becomes paralyzed as we grow ever more comfortable with computerized ways of relating; we gradually recede into an indifference regarding the time and energy required for investing in authentic real-time relationships, and the commitments necessary for their sustenance. We may sink into patterns of an "indifferent urban life" where our face-to-face communication regresses, and we know little of what lies at the heart of our neighbor's situational life, let alone who we ourselves are in our deepest core.

Social media may also provide windows for prying inappropriately into another's life, lacking any semblance of true intimacy, since it erases the right balance between distance (privacy) and nearness (communion). Left unchecked, digital browsing on the information highway may even erode the joyful intimacy of simply being together in affective, empathetic ways, making us feel really understood by others who love us. A sort of "vicarious intimacy" may gain precedence, especially in the lives of adolescents, as they connect with a movie star, a sports hero, or a charismatic speaker while spending inordinate amounts of time engaging these figures in virtual — not authentic— reality.

Ironically, social media's facilitation of a penchant towards exposure of too much of one's own interiority may lead to an individual's deeper isolation. Devoid of the



profoundly stretched, raising questions about the possibility of genuine human and spiritual self-revelation connections with others.

Not only has social media blunted our vital connectedness but it also affords us extraordinary opportunities for manipulating our “online presence” in ways that conceal our true person and motives, opening the door to mis-representation and falsification of identities. Psychologist John Suler has engaged in extensive research related to the phenomenon of “online presence.” He speaks of “online disinhibition effect,” a dampening of relational dynamics due to the ease of posting content and disclosing information anonymously. Feeling somehow invisible online, we post or respond to things in ways that we would never respond in person (Suler, John. *The Online Disinhibition Effect*. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, Volume 2, Issue 2, pages 184–188, June 2005).

Ideally, our deepest “core form” is aligned with our “apparent form.” Social media, however, provides an easy means for the manipulation of our apparent form, in both trivial and significant ways, even distorting our self-image. Anonymity and invisibility can facilitate a rupture of our apparent form from our vitality, and our actual life from our online life and reality. Sadly, perhaps we are all too familiar with an experience of beholding the “online presence” of a young teenager, replete with posts of vulgarities and sexual innuendos, that seems to run counter to the demure, quiet persona of the teen we behold face to face.

As we are uploading dozens of photos every day, updating our Facebook status several times per week, and responding to innumerable requests to “please retweet!”, it is imperative not to lose sight of the source of our own energies, attention and affection. Overuse and inappropriate use of social media run counter to the intimacy essential to vibrant human relationships. As an example, we risk the demise, if not the loss, of the simple art of ‘intimate conversation’; leisurely togetherness over coffee is all too often

replaced by posts, re-posts, and the number of ‘likes’ we can generate on Facebook. It is a challenge to remember the joy and fruitfulness of face-to-face encounters.

Our hunger for connectedness demands an energy that can, in the long run, deplete our vital presence and make us mere extensions of the devices we operate. As a simple example, it would serve us well to guard against the seemingly innocuous invitations to employ the “like” button, a resoundingly over-used, cyber-generated solicitation for confirmation, as we are requested to “like” products, trends, hotel stays, other people’s posts, and shopping experiences. Our authentic relationships, on the other hand, need to be assessed in light of the potential blessedness of caring, supportive companionship that can never be measured or monitored by an instantaneous reflexive response.

CONCLUSION

Social media platforms provide powerful tools for connecting, and perhaps strengthening, our online relationships through sharing. If there is an upside to relating in a digital age, it may be found in the happiness military wives, husbands or families feel when they can Skype their “special guy or gal” in a war zone, or when grandparents can face-time one of their grandchildren from far away. At its worst, however, social media affords the penchant for furthering our trajectory into narcissism and self-absorption, while distorting our perceptions of intimacy, self-disclosure, and authentic relating.

Our online presence and relationships in this media-oriented age need to be appraised in light of a well-formed disposition of privacy that honors the inexhaustible richness of our own interiority, as well as that of others. A private life, aspiring toward communion, inspires us to meet the other in intimacy; yet we need to re-visit periodically the depths of our own intrasphere and our own privacy through times of solitude and restoration. We may have hundreds of Facebook friends,

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



SUSAN MUTO, PHD

Executive Director of the Epiphany Association, Susan is a renowned speaker, author, and teacher. A single lay woman living her vocation in the world and doing full-time church ministry, she has led conferences, seminars, and workshops throughout the world. She is the recipient of the 2014 Aggiornamento Award presented by the Parish and Community Library Services Section of the Catholic Library Association in recognition of an outstanding contribution made by an individual or an organization to the ministry of renewal modeled by Pope John XXIII (1881 - 1963).



LORI MITCHELL MCMAHON

Lori currently serves as Program Coordinator at Epiphany Academy and is also a member of the faculty, teaching in the Epiphany Certification Program (ECP) as well as facilitating various other webinars and programs. She has over 15 years' experience in Adult Formation and has conducted various retreats and formation workshops throughout the Greater Pittsburgh area. Lori has worked previously as an engineer, researcher, and physical therapist and has been married to her husband Mike for over 30 years; they are the parents of five children.

but they will never replace the pain and joy of coming to know and trust another person, a "soul-mate" that social media itself is not able to mediate.

As parents, teachers, caregivers, and hopefully as true friends, we continue to ponder with heart and mind the treasures of both privacy and communion. May we do our best to safeguard their formative unfolding and appreciate and treasure the unique mystery of every human heart. Although we cannot change the tides of our time, we can do simple things – for example, making sure our own appearances are always aligned with who we really are. As we learn to walk humbly, in the words of Teresa of Avila, "in the truth of who we are," may we recommit ourselves to relating to one another, and loving as Jesus would, in a digital age.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Reserving "space" for privacy is essential for the development of genuine sharing and vulnerability. The internet tends to erode that space and thus healthy boundaries become blurred and all of us could easily fall into narcissism. Am I comfortable with my own "private" space? Do I fall into patterns of unnecessary use of internet for "self-revelation"? Has my own privacy and personal dignity been compromised by others and their choices to "tell-all"? Do I respect the privacy of others?
2. Love requires "vital" presence – that is, the gentle spark of divine love partnering with our inner spirit. Not only can the internet blunt the dynamism of such vital love but it can also allow for us to manipulate our "on-line presence." Relationships take time and honesty. Am I always honest in my self-presence on the internet? Am I in touch with the divine "vitality" within myself and within others? How might I become even more sensitive to the gifts and needs of others that can never be captured on the "screen"?

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TREATMENT

PROGRAMS, INTERVENTION, EDUCATION
AND CONTINUING CARE

The men's and women's programs at Guest House are uniquely Catholic and provide the spiritual environment for effective clinical treatment of addiction and other behavioral health conditions for priests, deacons, seminarians, and men and women religious, leading to quality recovery and overall health and wellness.

For more information on treatment
programs, intervention, education or
continuing care,
call 1-800-626-6910

Joe Shoots, MA, LLP, CAADC
Executive Director
Men's Treatment Program
jshoots@guesthouse.org

Mary Ellen Merrick, IHM, D. Min., MAC
Executive Director
Women's Treatment Program
memerrick@guesthouse.org



Guest House
1956-2016
Faith, Hope, Compassion

Individualized Treatment and Compassionate Care

GuestHouse.org

1601 Joslyn Road

Lake Orion, MI 48360

248-391-4445

1-800-626-6910

THE SHAPE OF LOVE IN AN AGE OF DRIFT

Father Louis J. Cameli





INTRODUCTION

When the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor describes our time as "a secular age" in his book of the same title, he identifies what secularity has brought us. He includes an array of personal freedoms and scientific perspectives that have generated our world with all its indispensable technology. What this secular age has not given us is an enhanced capacity to love each other. In fact, if we look back on the twentieth century—and its patterns trail us into our own century—we can see perhaps the most starkly unloving chapter of all human history.

When Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council in the middle of the twentieth century, he knew as an historian, as a diplomat, and as an expert in humanity that we stood in a critical moment. He said, "Today the Church is witnessing a crisis underway within society. While humanity is on the edge of a new era, tasks of immense gravity and amplitude await the Church, as in the most tragic periods of its history." That century, in which he spoke, was marked by multiple genocides, two world wars, the development of the weapons of mass destruction, and the alarming inequity between those who had more than enough and those who did not have enough to cling to life.



It was and, indeed, continues to be a loveless time deeply in need of love and the mercy to which Pope Francis has summoned the world.

The lack of love has never extinguished the desire for love. With power that comes from profound disillusionment, the poet W. H. Auden stood on the brink of the Second World War and wrote these words in his poem “September 1, 1939”:

For the error bred in the bone Of each woman
and each man Craves what it cannot have, Not
universal love

BUT TO BE LOVED ALONE

As Europe faced the abyss of the Second World War, Auden identified the deepest desire, that universal craving, not for power or lands or even money, but for love that is personal and complete. Our secular age desperately longs for and needs love that can forge real human connections and offer genuine human fulfillment. Ironically and sadly, because this secular age is either skeptical of religious faith or rejects it outright, abundant and effective resources for human love available in the traditions of faith are out of reach for those who need it most.

Consequently, our secular counterparts find

themselves in a state of drift, as they experiment with relationships and forms of altruism and even various kinds of addiction. They never quite find what they most need and want—love that is true and enduring and, ultimately, fulfilling.

Can our traditions of faith help to shape human love in ways that make it possible and genuine? I am convinced that the traditions of faith can do that. In the short reflections that follow, I offer a beginning response but not a complete one. Framing love in ways that make it possible and human will always remain a perennial task of the Church, always in need of completion. Each age, each circumstance, each individual must draw out love’s meaning and possibility with faith as the lens for viewing our experience.

Let me begin this attempt to link holy faith and human loving. Look on these reflections as particular aspects of faith and human love. They are sketches, not a complete portrait.

A BEGINNING FOR LOVE IN FIRST BEING LOVED

When Jesus washes the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper (John 13), he comes to Peter and a testy exchange ensues: “He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord are you going to wash my

feet?’ Jesus answered him, ‘You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’ Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.’” (John 13:6-8)

The foot washing symbolizes the death on the cross that Jesus will undergo the following day as well as the love that prompts him to embrace that cross: “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” (John 13:1) In a short while, Jesus will give his new commandment that his disciples: Love one another, as he has loved them. (See John 13:34) What does this mean? Peter can only love, if he has a prior experience of being loved by Jesus. But he is reluctant to let Jesus wash his feet, that is, to let Jesus love him. It is a reluctance that we all feel when we recognize that being loved can expose our need and, therefore, our vulnerability. Being loved, however, is the necessary foundation: “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.”

A distinctive feature of our lives in this secular and technological age is the value we place on our autonomy and our control of outcomes. Letting ourselves be loved seems to make us both dependent and out of control. This is a particularly modern challenge to love. With Peter, we hesitate. And yet without this foundational experience, we cannot move forward.

Significantly, this pattern seems to be true for Jesus himself. When his humanity is anointed with the Holy Spirit at his Baptism, he hears a voice that comes from heaven: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” (Luke 3:22) In his humanity, he knows that he loved and that conviction empowers him to take up his

loving and compassionate mission which he then announces in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-22).

This is where human loving begins: allowing ourselves to be loved, accepting that love, and knowing it.

LOVE THAT DESIRES RECIPROCITY BUT DOES NOT DEPEND ON IT

Shortly after the foot washing, Jesus predicts that he will be betrayed. And shortly after that announcement, his betrayer goes out into the night. Then Jesus pronounces mysterious words seemingly disconnected from the larger narrative: “When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.’” (John 13:31)

This part of the Last Supper narrative encapsulates a foundational fact of genuine love. Everyone who loves wants that love reciprocated. In fact, our deepest desire may be to be loved by the one whom we love. The story of Jesus and Judas expands that dynamic of love. Jesus would naturally want Judas’ love in return. His love, however, does not depend on Judas reciprocating it. And, in fact, Judas does not reciprocate Jesus’ love expressed in the foot washing but rather betrays him. The freely given love that wants but does not depend on reciprocity is the “glory” of which the passage speaks.

In a contemporary context, we can safely say that many, if not most of our relationships are commercialized. This does not mean that our love is for sale. Rather, it means that there is a certain quid pro quo reality about many of our relationships including our loving relationships. I give something, in order to receive something

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” (John 13:1)

"I SOUGHT AN
OBJECT FOR MY
LOVE; I WAS IN
LOVE WITH LOVE."

-ST. AUGUSTINE

in return. Not only is reciprocity desired, it is deemed necessary. And there is something childish or immature about this necessary reciprocity; mature, fully human love certainly desires reciprocity but does not depend on it.

This capacity to love without expectations or conditions of reciprocity is not only a mature human way of loving, but it also partakes of divine love. That seems to be the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven...For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same?" (Matthew 5:43-46)

LOVING IN A SELF-FORGETFUL WAY

Related to that love which does not depend on reciprocity is the love that is self-forgetful. This genuine and mature human love escapes the confines of the self. It breaks loose to reach out and embrace others. In our technological age, we are often tethered to devices which keep us locked within our own heads. The irony and the paradox are evident. The machines that

are meant to connect us more efficiently with each other tend to keep us tightly bound within ourselves. Watch people in an elevator or in a restaurant.

Paul's famous description of love in his first letter to the Corinthians can be understood in many ways. It is a rich text that is susceptible to different layers of meaning. But one clear and underlying understanding of love is its nature to go beyond oneself or to exit the self and, in that sense, to be self-forgetful. He writes: "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) This is not just love; it is human love that is developed and mature.

Saint Augustine struggled with this dimension of love. As he reviewed his early life in *The Confessions*, his spiritual autobiography, he came to identify his quest for love as a thread in his life. Yet, that quest for love took him down many dead end roads. Here, he describes his arrival in Carthage to pursue studies: "I came to Carthage and all around me hissed a cauldron of illicit loves. As yet I had never been in love and I longed to love; and from a subconscious poverty of mind I hated the thought of being less inwardly destitute. I sought an object for my love; I was in love with love, and I hated safety and a path free of snares." (III, 1)

As Augustine reflected on his experience, he saw in his early years a way of relating to others that seemed bound to *uti et frui*, either to use people for his own purposes or to have them for his own enjoyment. In either case, he never left himself. When he came to know the mystery of Jesus Christ who died and rose for him, he found the love that freed him from himself.

LOVING WITH FEELINGS AND BEYOND FEELINGS

There is no more passionate lover of Jesus Christ in all of Scripture than Paul the Apostle. He



expresses this intense and intimate relationship with the striking words that we find in his letter to the Galatians: "...it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) And yet, although his passionate and intense love corresponds to intense feelings, his love cannot be reduced to feelings. Even in their absence, the love continues. So he writes to the Corinthians: "So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day...for we walk by faith and not by sight." (2 Corinthians 4:16; 5:7)

Our epoch is not unique in the way we identify feelings with love. Across history, we can see that same identification played out, often with tragic results, in the Greek tragedies and in Shakespeare's plays and in contemporary literature as well. Still, it seems to me, our age has a special propensity to link intense feelings with intense love and to seek the proofs of love in those feelings. But because feelings are famously

transient—here today and gone tomorrow— they are an unstable foundation for something as serious and demanding as real human love which requires great stability.

People of faith, like Paul, know that love exists, even when feelings do not seem to match the love or, perhaps, are absent. Paul says, "Love never ends." (1 Corinthians 13:8) And elsewhere in our spiritual tradition, we can find lived experiences of love that do not depend on feelings, although feelings can and do play a part. Saint Therese of Lisieux provides a striking example of how love does not depend on feelings.

In the very last year of her life, Saint Therese experienced an extraordinary dark night of the soul. The sense of God's presence and the promise of heaven, which had been clearly felt realities for her, vanished. Her love, however, endured or, in Paul's words, never ended. Her last words, before she expired, were: "Oh, how I love him!" Therese's experience and her description of it in her autobiography opened a path for a revolution of spirituality in our modern and

post-modern era. She offered the possibility of experiencing the loving presence of God in God's apparent absence. Hers was a feeling love but also a love beyond feelings.

Both Paul and Therese offer a way of loving that is more human and more stable than what many of our contemporaries choose.

LOVING IN CLOSE CONTACT

In two verses, Luke's gospel recounts an altogether remarkable cure that Jesus worked for a leper. It reads: "Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, 'I do choose. Be made clean.' Immediately the leprosy left him." (Luke 5:12-13) What makes this cure so remarkable? It is a detail that can easily escape our notice: "...Jesus stretched out his hand (and) touched him." Those who suffered leprosy not only struggled with a disfiguring disease, but they were also socially isolated and forced to keep their distance from others. The fear of contagion and impurity kept lepers away from human contact. In his loving compassion, Jesus breaks the boundaries that isolated the man with leprosy. In an unthinkable gesture, Jesus reaches out and touches the man who is—to everyone else—untouchable.

Genuine human love comes close to other persons and makes contact with them. This would seem obvious, especially in a culture like our own which seems obsessed with the quest for intimacy. It may not, however, be as clear in our historical and cultural moment as one might think.

The development of technology and the commercialization of sexuality have combined to form what I would call a "pornographic culture," which is emblematic of our time. Easy access to sexually explicit materials has ensnared many people in addictive patterns and probably, in one way or another, affected the lives of all of us. Make no mistake. Pornography is the antithesis and the enemy of genuine human loving. How is this so?

Pornography creates "safe" distances between the viewer and the actor. It is a supposedly low-risk activity that does not entail human contact. At the same time, because pornography is linked to sexuality and sexuality is linked to love given and received, pornography confuses the prospect of real human love. Real love has real contact, as the cure of the leper demonstrates. And that contact carries its own risks. It is never risk-free. Of course, this is not necessarily sexual contact that we are considering. It is a real, live, person-to-person connection in many different forms.

Pope Francis has frequently spoken to those who serve in the Church. He tells them not to be afraid to "get the mud of streets" on them. He says, especially of priests, that they should have "the smell of the sheep." These various images speak of connection and real closeness, which is indispensable for loving others.

By indicating the indispensable need for real connection and contact, the traditions of faith illuminate the genuine paths of human love.

LOVING BEYOND FAILURE THROUGH FORGIVENESS

Cardinal Francis George once described

"Everything is permitted but nothing is forgiven."

our contemporary American culture as neo-Calvinistic. And in this culture, he went on to say, everything is permitted but nothing is forgiven. Whether or not Calvinism is at its origins, I am convinced that the Cardinal's take on the cultural mood is correct: you have permission to do whatever you want but, if you are caught doing what is not acceptable or right, you have no chance for forgiveness and starting over again.

This mentality can unlink forgiveness from love. And that means that there is no room for failing each other in loving relationships and no possibility to pick up the pieces and start over, when people hurt each other. The message is as stark as it is unrealistic: every failure within a loving relationship threatens to undo it entirely.

The traditions of faith, on the other hand, insistently link love and forgiveness. Think, for example, of the story of the sinful woman at the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). Her demonstration of loving attention to Jesus by washing his feet with her tears is linked to her experience of forgiveness: "...I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love." (Luke 7:47) Forgiveness, in her instance, enables love to happen.

Paul identifies love as the power that drives forgiveness: "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love which binds everything together in perfect harmony." (Colossians 3:12-14) The assumption in this passage is that we will inevitably fail each other in various ways, some insignificant but others of greater weight. It is not a matter of "if" but "when"; disappointments and pain happen in all relationships. For that reason, Paul calls for a steady rhythm of forgiveness moved by love and reinstating love.

By offering a way out of and beyond the offenses we inflict on each other, the traditions of faith move us past a way of loving that has zero

tolerance for failures. That rigid and overly idealistic approach to love becomes more human and more supple, when forgiveness enters the equation.

LOVING TO THE END, TO THE UTMOST

In John's gospel, the first verse of chapter thirteen introduces the foot washing at the Last Supper. It also introduces the larger narrative of the passion and death of the Lord. It reads:

"Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." (John 13:1)

The last phrase is worth our close attention—"he loved them to the end." The phrase "to the end" translates the original Greek *eis telos*, which has several meanings. It can mean, as this translation has it, to the end of what is to be accomplished. The phrase also has a qualitative meaning—to the very utmost. Finally, it can express a fulfillment of purpose. The text—"he loved them *eis telos*"—probably carries all three meanings simultaneously. Then, the phrase conveys a love that will not stop until it accomplishes what it sets out to do. It also conveys the sense of a love that is unrestricted in its reach. Finally, it speaks of a love that holds fast to its purpose or goal.

For our culture and in this moment, love *eis telos* as I have described it stands in stark contrast to many forms of love today. Our culture moves in short-term segments, and even love is generally not expected to last over the long haul. Our culture qualifies commitments and hesitates before making them, because people are reluctant to accept absolute values or to surrender themselves wholeheartedly, that is to say, to the utmost. Additionally, our current cultural take on love tends to focus on the moment, not on some long-term purpose. In the end, our cultural contemporaries have great difficulty in embracing a love that is *eis telos*. And that is not a neutral fact. When the possibility of love *eis telos* is eliminated, it means that human love is likely to be less human than it could be.

When love is provisional and reserved and without larger purpose, it cannot begin to match the restless longing that we all have for a full and complete love. Among the saints, the martyrs hold the pride of place for embodying a love eis telos after the pattern of Jesus. The inhuman suffering they endured—whether it is Ignatius of Antioch, or Agnes, or Cecilia, or Maria Goretti, or Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or Oscar Romero—manifested a fully formed human love. In them, somehow love is genuinely manifested in all its humanity. Faith, again, gives depth to the human experience of love.

LOVING THAT TRANSCENDS ITSELF AND ENTERS INTO TRANSCENDENCE

I began these reflections by citing Charles Taylor and his study of our secular age. One truly notable characteristic he ascribes to our secular age is its fully sufficient immanent humanism. In other words, we live in a world that goes on its own way and by its own power, drawing on human resources and not regarding transcendent possibilities beyond the human. I think that Taylor correctly describes the general mood, although there are also many individuals who do not live in such a restricted framework. They are the ones who have glimpsed in their immanent human experience an intimation of a larger, indeed, infinite and ineffable Mystery that envelopes them. But for those who are thoroughly attached to the boundaries of a fully sufficient immanent humanism, there is love but there is no Love absolutely. That signals not only a lack of religious faith but also a human impoverishment.

A key to understanding love transcending itself and opening to Absolute Love can be found in John's gospel. Even more precisely, it can be found in a conjunction that appears in John's gospel-- *kathôs* which means "as." Scholars make much of little things. In this case, their efforts are well rewarded.

In chapter fifteen of John's gospel, Jesus makes two statements: (1) "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you" (John 15:9); (2) "This is my

commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). A close analysis of these statements reveals that there are sets of proportional relationships that can be expressed this way: Father TO Jesus—SO— Jesus TO his disciples—SO—his disciples TO each other. We can express this in more narrative terms beginning with the end relationship of the disciples among themselves. When the disciples love each other, they make real and present the love that Jesus extends to them. When the disciples experience that Jesus love in and through their love of one another, they somehow enter into the love of Jesus and the Father for each other. In other words, we begin with human-to-human love, and it becomes a pathway for entering into the absolute Trinitarian love of the Father and the Son, whose bond of unity and mutual love is the Holy Spirit.

The extraordinary conclusion of this bit of language analysis of John's gospel is clear. Human love, real human love, can and does move beyond itself. It self transcends, so that we can move from our love for each other into the mystery of Absolute Love. Human love is most fully human when it moves beyond itself and begins to realize that it is God's love which pulses through us; our love shares in a greater mystery.

CONCLUSION

Love is an aspiration and a reality of human existence. Yet, paradoxically, to become fully human, love must move beyond any number of cultural biases that belong to our secular age with its own brand of limited humanism. The true fulfillment of human love as fully and maturely human can only happen when the narratives of faith shape and direct our love.




QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. In various ways Fr. Cameli points out how our culture's understanding and presentation of "love" is at odds with the Christian vision of love: we value independence and autonomy; we have expectations of those we love; we see everything as temporary. Do I see/feel any of these qualities or descriptions in myself? How am I addressing them?
2. Fr. Cameli notes that we equate "feelings" with profound love and that when the feeling is gone, we presume the love has also vanished. He also applies this tendency to the spiritual life: if God does not bless me with some "warm fuzzy feelings" or insights, if He allows me darkness and aridity, something is "wrong." How am I dealing with love that does not equate itself with feelings?
3. The author also speaks of our "pornographic culture" as a barrier to and substitute for "real human contact." Do I distance myself from others by becoming absorbed in tasks or addicted to technology or just over-use of it? Does technology sometimes take me away from being "fully human?"




ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father Louis John Cameli pursued his studies in theology at the Gregorian University in Rome where he received a doctorate in theology with a specialization in spirituality in 1975. Ordained in Rome, December, 1969 for the Archdiocese of Chicago, Father Cameli served on the faculty of University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary and later as director of ongoing formation of priests in the Archdiocese of Chicago. He has served as a close advisor to Cardinals Bernardin and George and now Archbishop Cupich. He has published many books on spirituality and faith formation and has been a retreat director for priests' retreats and as a presenter for priests' convocations in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair. She is looking down at a bright blue smartphone held in her hands. The background is out of focus, showing warm, golden light, possibly from the sun. The overall mood is contemplative and modern.

MILLENNIALS AND CHRISTIAN LOVE: SEARCHING FOR LASTING VALUES

Michael Charbonneau



In his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* (The Joy of Love), Pope Francis tackles a topic that deeply affects every human being: love. Although primarily addressed to love in the context of marriage and family, the Holy Father recognizes the unique challenges that young people face choosing Christian marriage and living a committed, loving relationship according to the Gospel. The Pope's exhortation, and other synods and World Youth Days, represent an effort to reach Millennials (born 1980's and beyond, reaching adulthood after 2000). This demographic has made a well-documented move away from Christianity and organized religion in general. Given that trend, Christian teachings on love may seem somewhat irrelevant to Millennials—just another aspect of tradition that they have left behind. Yet for young people who have grown up with Christianity, the situation is often more complicated. Their views on love and the way they practice it often include elements of Christian teaching, even among those who are not explicitly religious.

"It is easy nowadays," Francis writes, "to confuse genuine freedom with the idea that each individual can act arbitrarily, as if there were no truths, values and principles to provide guidance, and everything were possible and permissible." He seems to be speaking directly to Millennials: Numerous studies indicate that they have turned away from the values and principles of organized religion. A Pew survey from 2014 reports that only 41% of Millennials consider religion important, and even fewer (27%) attend religious services on a regular basis. (Another Pew survey from 2012 found that fully one third of adults under thirty did not identify with any religion at all.)

MILLENNIAL SPIRITUALITY

In place of identifying with a religion, many Millennials practice a sort of free-form spirituality, often described as being "spiritual but not religious." The same 2014 Pew survey also captured a rise in the number of people who regularly experience a "deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being" and feelings of "wonder about the universe." Similarly, a 2012 study by Carnegie Mellon University showed that 62% of people surveyed (all aged 18-34) said they "talk to God." Taken with the data on declining religiosity, these findings point to an interesting facet of Millennial spirituality: It is something cultivated apart from Church teaching. Overall, research suggests that Millennials view spirituality in largely individual terms; something discovered on one's own, rather than by studying doctrine or following Church guidelines. Millennials do think about spirituality and/or wrestle with "big" questions about life and their relationships with others, but fewer and fewer turn to the Church to guide them on those matters.

FAITH, LOVE, AND SEX

Logically, if many young people are setting out on their spiritual journeys apart from Christianity, it would make sense that their views on love would also diverge from Christian teaching. In many ways, this seems to be true.

Dr. Donna Freitas has done extensive research on the intersection of faith and love among young people in college. She has found that the Millennial separation of spirituality and religion is especially evident in their views on romantic love. In her 2008 book

Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America's College Campuses, Freitas argues that "most students keep religion and sex separate."

"In their campus communities religion is a private affair," she writes, "and in their religious communities (if they still have one) sex is a private affair." In her interviews with students, Freitas describes a "wedge" driven between them and Christianity because it "seems to have nothing to say about dating and romance." That silence leads many young people away from the Church, and causes "secrecy and duplicity" as young Christians struggle to separate their sex and dating lives from their religion.

This holds true for older Millennials as well. Lydia Mokdessi is a 26-year-old artist and performance maker in Brooklyn, New York. Raised Presbyterian and a former Bible camp attendee, she now identifies herself as an "agnostic skeptic" and is not affiliated with any religion. For her, the Church's lack of any practical teaching on sexuality and romantic love led her to reject Christianity as a whole. Sex "wasn't ever discussed," she says, recalling her experiences in church and at camp. The disconnect between the reality of her life and the Church's silence on sex caused a crisis of faith for her.

When asked about love and Christianity, other Millennials' responses inevitably turn to negative feelings around sex as well. Jim Murtagh, a 24-year-old comedian from New York who was raised Catholic, describes experiencing feelings of shame around sex, although for different reasons than Mokdessi. His feelings stem from the overt prohibition (rather than silence) on premarital sex. "It has actively made relationships hard for me," he says, noting that even though he is no longer a practicing Catholic, the feelings remain: "It's hard to ignore a lesson that was so ingrained in you."

HOOKUP CULTURE

For many Millennials, the reaction to Christian teaching on sex has been to jump ship, abandoning religion and navigating their adolescent and adult love lives without the Church's guidance. Researchers and commentators have paid a great deal of attention to one aspect of the result: hookup culture. Donna Freitas explores this extensively in her book *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture is Leaving a Generation*

Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused About Intimacy. She investigates a world of sexual exploration that rejects any kind of emotional or spiritual element, and certainly anything close to love. She describes sexual encounters drained of feeling and meaning, and that are, in the words of one student, “purely physical [and] emotionally unattached.” The key to hooking up, Freitas concludes, is “being able to walk away from sex without any trace of an emotional tug.”

Others have also lamented this state of affairs on college campuses. In a 2014 op-ed in *The New York Times*, Andrew Reiner, a professor at Towson University, argues that Millennials are unfit for serious relationships: “Their romance operandi—hooking up and hanging out—flouts the golden rule of what makes marriages and love work: emotional vulnerability.” He traces their romantic deficiency to a variety of sources outside the Church: pop culture messages, social media, and pressure from parents to succeed academically and in the job market (Reiner, 2014). Taken together, it is hard to imagine a culture more diametrically opposed to Christian teaching on love. Yet it is also important to admit that this culture is a product of the lack of meaningful and positive guidance on sex and loving relationships.

A DESIRE FOR FELLOWSHIP

Although it gets a lot of press, hookup culture is not the full picture of how Millennials view love. In the face of a growing trend toward secularization, many Millennials who have left the Church still retain elements of Christian teaching on love, and make real efforts to live out those teachings in their lives. Freitas makes the point that nobody is satisfied with the version of intimacy that hookup culture promotes. The people she interviewed in her research want “to have a meaningful sex life, even a soulful one,” she argues.

In addition, the desire among Millennials for depth in their relationships goes well beyond just sex and romance. Lydia Mokdessi notes that in her church love meant “community and fellowship and caring for the people.” These aspects of her Christian upbringing have become an integral part of her adult life, despite no longer self-identifying as religious. She sees a need for those elements of Christian love in herself and among her peers. She now runs weekly community groups for fellow artists and

performers in New York, organized for mutual support and fellowship. She describes it as a way of helping each other deal with the difficulties of their profession, hone their craft, and just “check in as human beings.”

The importance of caring and fellowship is a common thread in the way other Millennials view love as well. It is especially evident where they turn for support: to each other. When asked who he leans on for guidance in loving relationships, 23-year-old Will Speros, who grew up Catholic, says he calls on his friends, and describes his love for them as “ferocious.” Murtagh says that maintaining loving relationships is a way of coping with feelings of uncertainty about life—including his doubts about God and religion. “As terrified and confused and worried as I am, I constantly remind myself that all the people closest to me and that are around me also have these crazy fears,” he says, “And then that grounds me.”

THE CHURCH’S LASTING IMPRESSION

Although Murtagh, Mokdessi, and Speros say that the Christian Church plays little or no role in their loving relationships, the way they and others live out those relationships has a lot in common with Christian views on love. They still feel a need for fellowship and community support, but instead of finding it in church, they turn to their peers for it. Although he identifies as not religious and has major issues with Christianity, Speros recognizes that Christian teachings continue to influence what he values in his loving relationships: mutual respect and understanding. Now he sees those values outside or beyond a Christian context.

That is true: respect and understanding are not exclusively Christian, and Christianity is certainly not the only religion or institution that promotes them. But note that Speros, like many Millennials who have left the Church, learned them as Christian values. Those values remain a central part of their lives and their views on love even after they have left the Church behind. “I had to go through a big rejection of all organized religion in order to come back to the parts that I think are OK,” says Mokdessi.

Given the data, Pope Francis has good reason to be worried about young people leaving the Church, and the effects that trend will have on Christian love



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Charboneau is a writer living in Brooklyn, New York. His writing has appeared in *America* magazine and *The Morning News*.

and family values. For a large and growing portion of Millennials, Christianity has lost relevance. But the reality behind this trend is complex: Many young people are not finding fulfillment with the hedonistic atmosphere of hookup culture. Deep, loving relationships are vital to them. Like all people, Millennials are searching for answers that speak to their own life experiences and the relationships they have. What's striking is that for many, even after leaving the Church, the idea of love they turn to looks surprisingly familiar.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. According to Michael Charboneau's review of research data about what Millennials might want or need from the Church, he noted two somewhat conflicting viewpoints: some sought more explicit moral guidance while others found laws and overt teachings to be a further reason to stay away from organized religion. How explicit do you think the Church could or should be regarding these matters?
2. It seems as if values "planted" in people's hearts in their formative years will eventually resurface and shape their adult lifestyle, even if they no longer find meaning or consolation in Church teachings or structures. Have you found that to be the case?



Guest House®

1956-2016

Faith, Hope, Compassion

Celebrating 60 years of bringing healing to the Catholic Church by providing residential addiction treatment programs for clergy and religious to restore their health and their return to active ministry

Information regarding interventions, referrals
and specific program services
available 24 hours a day at 800-626-6910 or
GuestHouse.org



Joe Shoots, MA, LLP, CAADC
Director of the Guest House
Men's Treatment Program
Joe can be reached by email at
jshoots@guesthouse.org



Mary Ellen Merrick, IHM, D.Min., MAC
Director of the Guest House
Women's Treatment Program
Mary Ellen can be reached by email at
memerrick@guesthouse.org

Strengthening Catholic Communities since 1956
1601 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, Michigan 48360



PURIFIED LOVE

By Msgr. John Zenz



Our Editorial Board thought it might be helpful to create a short “examen” helping readers reflect on how well we are responding to God’s offer of love in our daily lives and how we are expressing that love toward others. This examen may even be helpful as a parish penance service or a retreat meditation.

1.) “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as expiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

...Love begins with God; it is His right as our creator and savior to “propose” to us. Christians are first and foremost “responders to the action of God.” Am I a good receiver? How readily do I express my gratitude to God for every aspect of my personality – my apparent strengths but also limitations and challenges of body or spirit? Do I accept everything that the Lord allows to come my way? Do I trust in His Providential care and generosity for me and for all people? How might I develop a greater awareness of God’s generosity and wait for Him to “take the first step” toward me? Do I give God the time and space to do so?

2.) “Beloved, if God has so loved us, we must also love one another.” (1 John 4:11)

... In my dealings with others, would I say that I am primarily trying to please/appease them or am I genuinely trying to allow the love of God to shine upon me and through me? Do I believe that others are instruments of God’s love directed toward me? St. John tells us that we should love one another as God loves us: Do I take the initiative to reach out - even to people who have been indifferent or hurtful? Is my love as selfless as possible – without any expectation of response or acknowledgment? Do I love those who can do absolutely nothing for me?

3.) “No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God remains in us and His love is brought to perfection in us.” (1 John 4:12)

... Do I share the vision articulated here by St. John that God wants to partner with me as I express love or when I am receiving love? St. John speaks of “God’s love coming to perfection” – in other words, God’s love being able to fulfill its purpose or run its course in me and through me and in all the relationships that define my life. Do I think about His love as the energy which is at work in me? What distractions or false desires might need to be purified within me so that I could allow God’s love to be made perfect or complete in all my relationships?

4.) “Love rejoices with the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6)

...Am I honest in all the ways that I express myself to others? Is my love pure of heart? Do I love myself to the point that I can admit my psychological limitations and patterns of addiction or obsessive/compulsive behavior? Am I willing to talk about them with others? Do I want to be a “whole” person or am I content to remain in comfortable habits that are perhaps not healthy for me or for others? Is there genuine honesty in all my relationships? Am I “honest to God” in my prayer? Am I willing to “speak the truth in love” to my spouse, a good friend or fellow minister – even when it might jeopardize or end our relationship? Do I strive to be a person of integrity? Is there a correspondence between my words and my deeds?

5.) "Love is patient... it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (I Corinthians 13:4,7)

...In the Scriptures patience has to do with acceptance of suffering in our own lives and willingness to stand by others in their times of physical or psychological stress. Am I a "patient" person? Am I faithful "in good times and in bad?" Think of a time and situation when I have been chronically impatient – perhaps driving or at meetings with certain people, in appointments, restless at prayer: How might I make patience in these situations not simply a matter of will-power but a manifestation of God and His patience for me and for the other? Do I ever contemplate the patience of God with me? One of the signs that love is addictive is that it cannot tolerate any delay; everything is urgent. Do I see traits of that attitude or anxiety in myself?

6.) "This is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." (Philippians 1:9-10)

...Throughout the Pauline Epistles, love is understood not so much in an individualistic way but rather as something communal. My love for God and God's love for me is to be experienced in, with and through the community. When I love any member of the Body of Christ or the community, implicitly, I am also loving all other members of the community. Do I have such a vision of Christian love; do I think of it more in terms of individual preferences and choices, sacrifices and accomplishments? Do I remember to thank God for the loving sacrifices and prayer, witness and kindness of untold numbers of people that sustain me in being able to love? Do I understand that Christian love is about the community loving as one whole person, the Body of Christ? How might that vision and perspective change everything that I do?

7.) "So I will allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart...I will espouse you to me forever; I will espouse you in right and injustice, in love and in mercy. I will espouse you in fidelity and you shall know the Lord." (Hosea 2:16, 21-22)

...As human beings, we constantly fail in our commitments of love toward God and others. Do I ask the Lord's forgiveness on a daily basis? Do I sincerely try to examine my mind and heart to consider the ways that I have been resistant to His offer of grace? Do I also take into account the ways that I have been closed in on myself by being too absorbed in tasks and not ready and willing to focus on people and their gifts and needs? Can I admit to others my own failings in love? Do I allow others to speak to me about how they have been disappointed or hurt by my lack of concern or commitment?

8.) Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; for stern as death is love, relentless in the netherworld is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love nor flood sweep it away.” (Song of Songs 8:6-7)

...The Song of Songs celebrates the excitement and vital attraction between human beings, suggesting that even in the midst of erotic love and sexual desire and attraction, God's loving presence is to be experienced. Do I believe this? Do I allow myself to reflect on my sexual attractions and desires, seeking to see beyond the immediacy of lust to the energy of God at work in me and through me? Do I find joy – rather than shame – in the physical aspects of loving desires that surge within me? Can I turn these experiences into moments of prayerful celebration of the goodness of God? Do I try to move from lust to a deep reverence and thanksgiving to God for all beauty? Is my commitment to love “stern as death;” that is, is my love like that of the Lord who “loved His own to the end” or to the utmost possible? How often do I look at my relationships and see patterns of “using” others? Do I ever meditate on the Lord's enormous fidelity to me through every season?

9.) “Love one another as I have loved you.” There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for our friends.” (John 15:12-13)


...Do I recognize the mystery of God's love poured out in Christ's suffering upon the cross? Do I see my own daily sufferings as a way of sharing with Him in the mystery of the cross? Am I generous without reserve? How would I like to grow in generosity of spirit? Do I thank God for friends in my life whose listening heart and faithful presence help me know His own love?

10.) “To love another person is to see the face of God.” (Les Miserables, final words of Jean Valjean)

...Think of a specific encounter when you saw the face of the Lord in the face of another and felt the flow of divine energy between both of you. Perhaps it was a chance encounter on the street with a stranger, even a beggar. Maybe it was a moment of peaceful clarity and purity of heart in a conversation with a friend, a spouse, a parent or child. Do I strive to be in a state of eager readiness and openness for such encounters of grace?

Concluding prayer:

Lord, give us all the grace to believe and live according to the wisdom of St. Ignatius of Loyola: 'fall in love and stay in love' and your life will be anchored in peace. May we always remember you look upon us as your beloved sons and daughters, members of the Body of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

A close-up photograph of a hand, with the fingers slightly curled and pointing towards the right. The skin is a warm, reddish-pink color. The background is a dark, textured green, possibly a book cover or a piece of fabric. The lighting is soft, highlighting the contours of the fingers.

*“Love one another
as I have loved you.”*

John 13:34





*****AUTO**ALL FOR ADC 945
HD070276461 0001
GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION 8001
LIBR-SERIALS DEPT 075#
2400 RIDGE RD 00750
BERKELEY CA 94709-1212

PERIODICAL

HD

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Upcoming Issues of

Winter 2017: Bringing the Beatitudes to
Spring 2017: Health of Mind and Body



Human Development Magazine is a quarterly publication for people involved in the work of fostering the growth of others.

This includes persons involved in religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, pastoral care, education and those interested in the development of the whole person.



SUBSCRIBE ONLINE
HDMAG.ORG



CALL TO SUBSCRIBE
1(800)555-1212